DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 650 CE 053 958

AUTHOR	Scott, Ian; And Others
TITLE	Doing by Learning. A Handbook for Organisers and Tutors of Village-Based Community Development Courses.
INSTITUTION	ACRE: Action with Communities in Rural England, Cirencester.
SPONS AGENCY	British Telecom, London (England).; Rural Development Commission, London (England).
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-871157-35-8
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	118p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Action with Communities in Rural England, Stroud Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6JR, England (6.95 pounds plus postage).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Community Action; *Community Development; *Community Programs; Course Evaluation; Curriculum Development; Educational Planning; Foreign Countries; Housing; *Rural Development; *Rural Education; Transportation
IDENTIFIERS	*England; Ireland

ABSTRACT

The ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) Rural Adult Education Project was conceived in the spirit of empowering local people to help themselves. This book, a distillation of the experience of the project, was written with the primary object of being of practical use to those who are already involved, or would like to become involved, in the organization and tutoring of village-based rural community development courses. The handbook contains five chapters and five appendixes. information on village courses as a vehicle for community development, gives directions for using the handbook, and describes courses within a community development program and educational perspectives. Chapter 2 describes the formation and activities of a planning group prior to offering a course. Chapter 3 includes information for the teacher on developing the curriculum. Chapter 4 describes the format of the sessions and identifies techniques. Chapter 5 discusses course evaluation. A "postscript" provides a reflective analysis of rural educational activity. Appendix A describes community development courses in the west of Ireland at University College, Galway. Five examples of course programs are included in Appendix B. Appendix C provides an introduction to parish councils. Appendix D describes using press releases and press conferences to help in community development. A sample course evaluation questionnaire is provided in Appendix E. A prefatory note explains that ACRE is a charity taking action on jobs, housing, transport, shops, and other services in rural areas. It works at local and national levels providing information, advice, training, and action to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the countryside. A key to acronyms and abbreviations is included. (CML)

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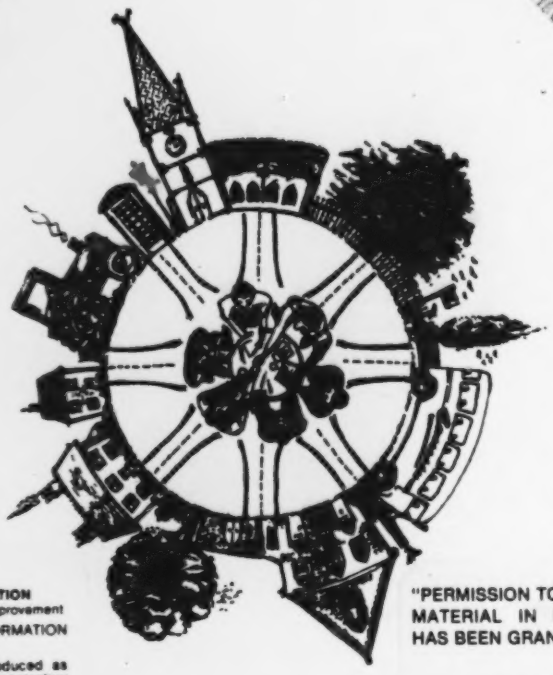

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A Handbook for Organisers and Tutors of Village-Based Community Development Courses

The Arid Rural Adult Education Project

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DOING BY LEARNING

A Handbook for Organisers and Tutors of
Village-Based Community Development Courses

Ian Scott
Jackie Denman
and
Bernard Lane

The ACRE Rural Adult Education Project

Foreword by Malcolm Moseley

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ACRE, Stroud Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6JR

ACRE is a charity taking action on jobs, housing, transport, shops and other services in rural areas. As the national association of England's 38 Rural Community Councils, we work at local and national levels, providing information, advice, training and action to improve the quality of life of all those living and working in our countryside.

Designed by Sian Cope
Illustrations by Steven Garner
Printed by Dotesios Printers Ltd
Publishing Manager: Juliette Fleming

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ISBN 1 871157 35 8

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KEY TO ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

		See Page
ACRE	Action with Communities in Rural England	(ii)
LEA	Local Education Authority	21
NIACE	National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education	22
RAE	Rural Adult Education (Project)	11
RCC	Rural Community Council	17
RDA	Rural Development Area	17
RDP	Rural Development Programme	17
REPLAN	(not an acronym)	94
WEA	Workers Education Association	21

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jackie Denman has previously been employed as a rural community worker with Hereford & Worcester Rural Community Council and for two years worked intensively in five small parishes in West Herefordshire. Prior to this she was based in London with the Rural Department of NCVO, before moving to Herefordshire where she has lived for 11 years, becoming involved locally in many community activities.

In 1987 she tutored an RAE course for Bristol University in Dymock, Gloucestershire. In this book, she is principally responsible for Chapter 4 'The Course'.

Bernard Lane is an economic geographer, based at Bristol University since 1971, who has researched rural planning and development issues both in the UK and in many European countries. In addition to organising an extensive annual programme of courses/conferences throughout the West Country on rural issues, he has played a major role in developing the Rural Adult Education Project's community development courses nationally. Since 1988 he has directed Bristol University's Rural Tourism Development Project, taking further the ACRE Project's principles of reskilling rural society.

He principally contributed: 'Educational Perspectives' (Chapter 1); 'Fitting in with Academic Schedules' and 'Resources Required by Educational Providers' (Chapter 2); 'The World Beyond the Village' (Chapter 3); 'Using the Media' (Appendix D).

Ian Scott, co-ordinator of ACRE's Rural Adult Education Project since its inception in 1985, and a regular tutor of courses, is a freelance rural community work lecturer and consultant. He lives in Dorset where, for ten years from 1974, he was fieldworker for the Rural Community Council.

A travelling fellowship undertaken in the West of Ireland for the Arkleton Trust over the winter of 1983/4 (published as *The Periphery is the Centre*, Arkleton Trust, 1985), directly led to the launch of the current RAE programme. He has combined his involvement in the work recorded in this handbook with contributions to a wide range of rural initiatives, both locally in the West Country, and nationally.

He acted as general editor of *Doing By Learning*, and wrote sections not otherwise attributed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to British Telecom and the Rural Development Commission for sponsoring this handbook and enabling us to record the practical experience of locally-based rural community development courses as generated by the ACRE Rural Adult Education (RAE) Project over the past four years. Generous financial assistance has been received for the Project itself from the Rural Development Commission, the Ernest Cook Trust, the Tudor Trust and other, local, sources. Our gratitude is due to each of these for their support for this innovatory work.

Throughout the life of the Project a small steering group has been convened by ACRE, principally composed of Peter Newell (Community Council for Wiltshire), Bernard Lane (University of Bristol) and Malcolm Moseley of ACRE itself. In the Project's former incarnation, when it was under the wing of the Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils, David Clark, Ian Strong and Alan Rogers also played a valued part. Of the many institutions which have assisted the project, the support of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Bristol has been invaluable.

The handbook could not have been written without material and advice supplied by colleagues from many parts of the country, reflecting their involvement in courses. It is impossible to mention them all, but we would like to record our appreciation to the following for their contributions, some of which are quoted directly in the text: Paul Andrews (Derbyshire RCC), Kath Barnett (Western Dorset Rural Development Area), Sarah Banks (Durham University), Graham Joyce (Yorkshire RCC), Malcolm Kimber (Shropshire RCC), Susanna Friel (Devon RCC), and Margaret Purdey and Moira Stone of REPLAN's Rural Needs team. Juliette Fleming of ACRE played a critical part in pulling the assembled material together and completing the reference section; our special thanks to her for her involvement.

From the start we have been inspired by the achievements in this field of colleagues at University College, Galway in the Republic of Ireland, and we would like to acknowledge their generosity. Despite all this support, we must inevitably accept responsibility ourselves for any errors which appear in the text.

Finally our warmest thanks are due to everyone who has been brave enough to enrol on one of the RAE courses, thereby, in the most direct fashion, enabling the courses to happen. At the start, each of them had every reason to be at least curious about the demands a new, unfamiliar format might make of them. The successful introduction of a new approach to community development, especially one that is very difficult to sum up in a snappy title or a promotional campaign, requires persistence and commitment from all parties involved. We hope that what we have written here adequately reflects the vitality and sense of achievement that we have heard reported from each of the courses that has run so far.

Ian Scott
Jackie Denman
Bernard Lane

FOREWORD

Over the past five years, a pilot project, initially rooted in the West Country but subsequently spreading to over a dozen widely scattered rural counties, has sought to examine the scope for fusing two hitherto rather separate endeavours – village-based adult education and rural community development. From Devon to Durham, groups of village people have come together to study both their community's problems, resources and aspirations and also the external forces for change which fashion them. Thus enlightened and empowered, many have moved on to practical action: building a community hall, launching a new bus service, coordinating a local tourism initiative, to name just three examples.

This book distils the practical experience of ACRE's Rural Adult Education Project. It is a 'handbook' in the sense that it both anticipates, and seeks to resolve, many of the practical problems that inevitably arise when planning, launching and executing such courses. But it is not a 'bible'; every village is different, every group of students has its own priorities, and every course tutor has his or her own ideas to test out.

'Community development' is difficult to define, but easier to recognise. It involves helping people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to 'get involved' with common purpose. In every English county there is a Rural Community Council ready, willing and able to support this process.

It was in the spirit of empowering local people to help themselves that the Rural Adult Education project was conceived in 1983-84; and in that spirit also that its principal architect, Ian Scott, has, with his collaborators Bernard Lane and Jackie Denman, put together this Handbook.

We are grateful to our various sponsors – listed in the Acknowledgements – and commend the enthusiasm of the various student groups. Let this observation, made by one such student in 1986, indicate just what can be achieved:

"We were all sitting on the edge of our chairs waiting to see what we were going to talk about next, how we could help, what we could do...

Although we only had 14 people it has started a new era in (this village)"

Malcolm J Moseley
Director of ACRE
June 1989

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Britain many thousands of rural communities are daily facing the challenges presented by the fast moving world around them. There is uncertainty, for example, about the changing shape of agriculture and the future of farm incomes; there is widespread concern about the means whereby future generations may continue to find housing and work locally; there is increasing awareness that a significant proportion of rural households live on very low incomes. There is also, perhaps most fundamentally, doubt expressed that the rural identity of some communities can remain intact for much longer.

The response to many of these challenges will in part be determined by decision-making and action remote from any single village. However the reactions of each community to change and to external decision-making will also be critical. How can the quality of this local response best be assured and, if possible, be improved?

Our handbook introduces one way forward: it shows rural community development being promoted via village-based adult education courses. It is therefore inevitably concerned with three ingredients of successful community development – inspiration, participation and consolidation. Largely because the community development process is so delicately balanced between local activity and the sympathetic provision of external support and resources (see the arguments on page 53), we have become convinced of the contribution that an educational format can make to furthering this process.

The strength of these community development courses is that they can be tailored to the interests of particular communities, and thus speak directly to individuals within the community. They allow an unforced opportunity for analysis and reflection, over several weeks, together with the provision of technical support to enable participants to develop their own ideas into practical action. This is the subject of our book.

Figure 1
Rural Community Development Courses 1985-89

- ▸ *Courses which have run*
- ▪ *Courses which failed to run their full length*
- ▫ *Current courses (1988/89)*

In putting the book together we have, above all else, attempted to produce something of *practical* use for all those already involved in, or interested in, the organisation and tutoring of village-based rural community development courses. (We use the term 'village-based' loosely;

small country towns are relevant too). Over the past four years ACRE's Rural Adult Education (RAE) Project has been actively promoting such courses, with, we feel now, a sufficient track record to warrant a consolidation in printed form of the techniques and materials developed. The handbook complements an earlier report[1] which recorded the Project's progress in some detail from its origins in the West Country to its current association with some thirty courses already run across fourteen English counties, and with new courses starting all the time (see Figure 1). As this is a relatively new and emerging field of activity, and may well be unfamiliar to some readers, a few introductory comments are perhaps called for before we come to the main part of the book.

VILLAGE COURSES AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

All of the work with which we are concerned here has been centred upon the use of adult/community education as a vehicle for community development. Specifically, it has demonstrated how community development courses hosted by rural communities can act as a means for them to identify issues of local concern, and then tackle some of these through practical action. (Table 5 on pages 90-91 shows the scale and scope of some of those courses already held). As a byproduct of this activity, the potential benefits of combining educational and community development objectives, methods and personnel as part of a rural development policy have been made clear.

The scope and potential of this approach is, we believe, far-reaching. All the courses to which we refer in this handbook have been open-ended; their focus has been the future of the host community, and their principal resource those local residents who have enrolled on the course. Apart from undertaking an analysis of the wider implications of rural development, course groups have been free to concentrate on those aspects of local development which *they* feel deserve attention. The responsibility of the course tutor is to make participants feel confident in their own research and planning, to introduce expert advice where appropriate, and to see through some of their proposals into practical achievements. In this way, not only is the subject of the course 'community development', but the form in which it is delivered reflects community development principles also. Course organisers and tutors work with what they find: local issues, local people and their experiences.

THE IRISH MODEL – Pioneering Work of University College, Galway

At the heart of this approach is progress made week to week between tutor, guests and course members as issues are jointly explored, rather than the more traditional perception of a tutor's role being to impart information and commentary to a relatively passive audience. Chris Curtin, one of the principal tutors at Galway University from whom the ACRE Project drew much of its inspiration, sees community development as being essentially an educational process, in the broadest sense, where participants 'learn by doing'. If their initiatives are to succeed, then they must learn to be effective and efficient, above all recognising and learning from their mistakes; and he suggests that in addition to the supply of assistance to current projects, this new format for courses can "provide an opportunity to those interested in community development to reflect upon their own fundamental assumptions and put their own efforts and difficulties into a comparative perspective".[2]

Galway's concentration on a practical open-ended format followed several years' involvement with a more formal diploma-based 'Social Action' course for potential community leaders. This was replaced in 1980 by the present format for several reasons which are outlined in the summary of the Galway approach contained in Appendix A. Most especially, the tutors felt that a more flexible approach was required, with appeal to a broader range of members of rural communities, and, if possible, held in their own meeting places rather than at a distance in a town. Chris Curtin sums up the new methodology in this way:

● *"We are now trying to incorporate academic or analytical ideas on communities and community development together with people's own experiences and trying to relate the two together. This is a challenging approach and different to one usually expected in a University environment..." (full quotation in Appendix A).* ●

ORIGINS OF THE RAE PROJECT

Fortunately for the present ACRE Project, Bristol University saw the relevance of the Galway approach to the work of its own Extra-Mural Department and responded to the challenge. With the support of three local county-based Rural Community Councils and the Rural Department of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), it included three courses modelled on the Galway approach within its 1985 winter programme. The generally encouraging results of these[3] led to the present ACRE initiative, launched initially via the Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils and transferred to ACRE at its inception in April 1987 when ACRE took over the work previously carried out by the Rural Department of the NCVO.

HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

During the life of the project we have attempted to pull together threads of experience from courses as they have happened, to build up a picture of practice, so that successful approaches may be passed on. One of the most fruitful aspects of this has been the way that the concerns of interested parties planning a course as a new venture in their area have been answered by another's direct experience somewhere else. Usually these concerns are of a practical nature, for example:

- the best way to finance a course;
- the most appropriate structure for a course;
- the form of the crucial first session;
- the experience likely to be required of a prospective tutor

...and many others. Without in any way wishing to impose a blueprint of how courses should be run, we have felt the need to retain some of the materials developed and the techniques adopted in a more permanent form, primarily as a reference source for future tutors and course organisers. These will need to be supplemented in ways that suit the requirements of each course and are published here simply as a starting point.

There is of course an inherent difficulty in addressing a general purpose handbook such as this to readers with different requirements of it. Tutors and course organisers will find chapters specifically directed to their separate needs: **educational agencies**, for example, will find the sections 'Educational Perspectives' in Chapter 1 and 'Resources required by Educational Providers' in Chapter 2 particularly of relevance; **community development agencies** will be interested in 'Courses within a Community Development Programme' in Chapter 1, 'Back-Up for Post-Course Developments' in Chapter 4 and the last chapter, 'Outcomes'. However, neither group

should restrict itself to these sections and each needs to consider the extent to which its involvement overlaps with the other.

Two vitally important aspects of setting up a course are discussed in more than one chapter: **publicity** is covered in Chapter 2 as a pre-course activity to attract participants and in Chapter 3 as an important skill to be learnt within the course. Detailed advice on handling media interest in courses is given in Appendix D. **Funding** is covered in Chapter 2 in the context of pre-course planning by educational providers, in Chapter 3 in the context of negotiating skills and in Chapter 4, with reference to funding of projects inspired by the course.

Readers with a general interest in the subject will discover that the bulk of the handbook follows a fairly simple chronological sequence once the context of courses has been discussed in the introductory chapter.

Finally, it should be made clear that the handbook cannot offer a general survey of current rural adult education provision, nor even that part of the provision concerned with rural issues. That is beyond our scope. Rather we have aimed to present and reflect upon a particular educational approach, or method, that fits into the spectrum of current provision and yet also draws upon the experience and methodology of rural community work in recent years. The handbook is based upon a wide range of practice across the country, including some interpretations of the basic method which have stretched it to formats ranging from day schools involving prospective parliamentary candidates to study circles, from independent self-regulated 'think tanks' set up alongside a formal course to groups concentrating on a single major local issue.

If the development process itself is seen to be a learning experience for even the most seasoned participant, then the scope for an educational format as a part of this process can be significant.

1. *Rural Community Development Through Adult Education* (1988), a final report on ACRE's Rural Adult Education Project, by Ian Scott; available from ACRE.

2. Quotations from *Adult Education and Community Development in the West of Ireland*, a paper given by Chris Curtin of the Social Sciences Research Centre, University College Galway to the RAE seminar in December 1985.

3. See *Developing Your Community* (1985), a pilot programme report by Ian Scott; available from ACRE.

BUT WILL IT WORK?

Most tutors and course organisers considering becoming involved in a rural community development course will be aware that rural communities are currently subject to a complex combination of social, cultural and economic pressures of varying degrees of severity according to their location and history. Agricultural surpluses and spiralling house prices may well be just the most current and visible manifestations of profound long-term changes that are underway. Coupled with this, interest in matters rural is by no means limited to country people themselves. We are told that the great urban majority are affected almost daily in their thinking by their picture of a rural 'idyll', when reading books and magazines, when watching the television or listening to the radio, or, perhaps most significantly, when faced with advertising exhorting them to buy some product or other. The fact that this apparent idyll is a gross distortion of reality is rarely reflected in the present flood of

exposure given to rural matters in the national media.

One of the greatest problems in all this is that country people can easily see themselves as being subject to external forces beyond their control. There may of course be some truth in this perception, but the challenge for tutors and course organisers is to turn the tables and create an opportunity for course members to examine the nature and effect of these forces for themselves so that they can exercise their own judgement and plan accordingly. Courses are uniquely able to encourage this because of their objectivity, because they are student-centred, and because they allow new ideas to be tested out in a theoretical context before any attempt is made to put them into practice.

ANSWERING A CRITIQUE OF A COURSE BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Nevertheless the scale of the present rural crisis in some areas may already be leading some readers to question the effectiveness of a course-based approach as a counter measure. It is perhaps as well that those interested in becoming involved in courses in any depth should consider some of these questions at an early stage so that they feel confident of the inherent strengths of the approach before they attempt to apply it. For example, doubts have been expressed that the relatively small number of participants attracted to such a course held in a rural community can in any meaningful way be considered to be representative of the wider community around. Are not evening classes notoriously unsuccessful at attracting other than the leisured middle class? Is not the contemporary community so fractured that a 'community focus' becomes no more than a comfortable illusion that may actually play down conflict within the community and conceal the pressing needs of an invisible but sizeable minority of local people? In relation to our already mentioned Irish model, one might also question whether Irish communities are not radically different from those in England.

To answer the last question first, no doubt Irish communities are different in important respects; perhaps, at the risk of generalisation, most clearly in their ability to identify a common interest and externalise pressures upon them. There may also be a more clear acceptance in rural Ireland of the need for economic development to counter disadvantage and structural dependency, and less disruption of the social make-up of the communities through the arrival of large numbers of relatively affluent incomers. Nonetheless it can be argued that a community development frame of analysis (which a course is well placed to introduce) is just as valid for considering and facing the conflict *within* communities, as that caused by external pressures. If argued through rigorously it is certainly not an escapist route! We hope to show how courses, taking their place alongside other community development processes, can make a contribution towards helping rural people come to terms with what are often quite complex challenges.

Returning to the question of whether course members can be representative of the wider community, there is no doubt that this is crucial in most villages which are facing large scale changes affecting their social make-up. Although the pace of change may vary in different parts of the country, the general picture is of a massive influx of relatively affluent incomers arriving from urban backgrounds. The question of the social make-up of the host community and the

course's likely relationship to it will therefore, inevitably, be uppermost in the minds of course organisers in many areas especially at the earliest planning stages.

The experience of RAE courses as a whole has been that a reasonable cross-section of a community *can* be attracted. Given careful publicity, the prior involvement of community workers and members of the community themselves in distributing publicity, and the existence of important issues and opportunities for action locally, then people who would not normally see themselves attending courses can be attracted and a surprisingly wide representation achieved[4].

The ability of courses to handle change and conflict within the community is an important argument for the RAE approach; the next two sections look at this in more detail.

COURSES AND CHANGE

In an atmosphere of social change, groups within the community with different backgrounds can become alienated from each other. Perhaps the most common root of alienation is a lack of contact with, or a separation from, other people's experiences and view of the world, particularly when living close by. This is an extremely important factor in rural England today. Courses are one step removed from reality, and can therefore provide an opportunity for members to test out new ideas and new relationships both within the community and with the world outside. They are a chance to see things from other people's point of view.

Change should not be viewed as unproductive. Those involved in community work will be very familiar with the catalytic effect of the mixture of old and new, of the rooted local experience meeting the perhaps broader horizons and skills of sympathetic 'outsiders'. However the scale of present day change, and the economic forces driving it, are often seen to be too great to allow for such productive assimilation. Too easily the subtle and most valued aspects of community life are seen to be damaged; these are not necessarily the formal expressions of community - the village societies and organisations by which a sense of community is often rather superficially measured - but more often the informal and habitual[5].

A recent study sees the effect of this trend being to 'shame rural culture out of existence' with 'a sentimental fascination with coffee table rurality adding insult to injury'[6]. This is clearly deep water, part of a profound social change that may appear unlikely to be influenced by a single course! Nevertheless these factors will arise and be discussed by a course group, and therefore it is helpful to see the framework of a course itself as perhaps a uniquely suited mechanism for bringing members of a community together on relatively neutral ground. The course group is not being asked to respond to issues purely personally, but rather to construct and reflect a set of community-based values. The concept of community still has a significant hold on people's imagination and is valued, though often in abstract, understated ways. An unaccustomed, structured opportunity to view issues collectively can therefore be greatly appreciated. One very positive outcome of a mixed recruitment of long-term local residents and newcomers has been shown to be the value accorded to the experiences and views of the long-term residents.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN THE COMMUNITY

How then can the conflicts that exist in a community best be dealt with? Some attempts to

define the present day rural community see the average parish as consisting of 'communities of interest' in varying degrees of conflict with each other rather than as a single homogeneous community[7]. A course is well placed to express these differences fairly objectively and concentrate on productive interpretation of factual information that can universalise local issues and point to community-led responses.

The use of statistics to illustrate a specific difficulty can be helpful in this respect. For example figures can be produced relatively simply to show the comparative condition of the rural housing stock (see Table 1), the lowest price of houses to buy in an area relative to average wages, and the state of housing waiting lists. By revealing the ways in which external factors (and the price and availability of housing are here regarded as external factors) have the potential to give rise to conflict, then progress can be made towards a resolution of internal differences. Once the extent and nature of a problem is understood, then appropriate responses can be discussed. This is where examples of how other communities have responded will be valuable. In the case of rural housing, the pointers from other communities' experiences are to local housing surveys and parish-led housing association projects, making the parish itself the centre of interest and attention rather than a peripheral satellite of a distant centre where the critical decisions are taken.

Realistically the resolution of many major issues depends upon external intervention. In these cases a course can test out classic campaigning pressure group modes of operation. A course can provide a useful opportunity for asking the question "What would happen if we did such and such...? How would so and so respond?" It is generally a good rule that the more informed the demands that are made on external services, resources, and decision makers, the more likely there is to be a positive response.

The present analysis of social change in the countryside too easily becomes a detached philosophy of despair for those who are disadvantaged, unless it is applied to specific local situations. Although never sufficient, there is now beginning to be available detailed research work and data which can readily be applied, and supplemented by locally assembled material. Analysis centred upon local participation and experience and followed through with the continuity provided by the focus of a single locality will be especially valuable. A course is a very good excuse for the village community and concerned external agencies to concentrate on the identification of issues, pool their perception of these and co-operate in resulting action.

Table 1

English Rural Housing 1981: Some Quality Comparisons

	Conurbations		Rural Areas	
	'000s	%	'000s	%
Lacking one or more amenity*	475	5.8	168	4.2
Unfit dwellings	539	6.5	268	6.7
Estimated repair costs:				
<£ 3,000	6449	78.2	2997	75.3
>£10,000	233	2.8	231	5.8
Total dwellings	8246	100.0	3982	100.0

*amenities = w.c. inside dwelling, fixed bath in a bathroom, wash basin, sink, hot and cold water at three points.

Source: English House Condition Survey, 1981

As we shall see, one way of deciding the programme for a course (we call this 'setting the agenda') is to start with a projection by the course group of their fears and aspirations for the

community in ten years' time. Very often this exercise touches upon elements of the conflict, or potential for conflict, that exist in a community. The course must allow this conflict to be recognised; in fact it can become a major focus for discussion. Even if the course group itself admits to being very unrepresentative, or out of touch with some aspects of local life (and this is surprisingly rare) there can still be advantage in looking closely at community-based approaches elsewhere that reflect community development principles.

One final point: despite the often lamented demise of traditional village leaders – the clergyman, teacher, postmistress or policeman – very encouraging reports have been received from course tutors of the development of new, relevant forms of leadership and initiative amongst their groups. They have frequently commented on the quality of individual members attracted to courses, paying tribute to their skills and commitment, finding them to be, as one tutor said: "quite special people in unlikely places".

4. This assessment is based upon informal reports from tutors and course organisers during the lifetime of the RAE project.

5. See section on 'loss of community' especially pages 197-198, in *Green and Pleasant Land?* (1979) by Howard Newby, Pelican.

6. Quotation from Trevor Bailey in, *Rural Arts: A discussion document for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* (1989) by Trevor Bailey and Ian Scott.

7. For example see sections 'What is a rural community?' and 'Deprivation in rural areas – myth or reality?' in *The People, the Land and the Church* (1987) published by the Diocese of Hereford.

COURSES WITHIN A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

There are several agencies responsible for promoting community development locally in rural areas. Any of these, or indeed a combination of them, should prove to be a valuable resource for a course. Many combine an interest in wide ranging promotional work for the benefit of all communities with an intensive involvement in a chosen few. They would include county Rural Community Council (RCC) and Rural Development Programme (RDP) members and staff (though not every county has an RDP and not every RDP has staff – see below), local authority outreach workers, and other, independent, agencies. Our experience has been that the success of a course has very often been dependent upon the involvement of at least one of these agencies, acting in partnership with an educational provider, represented by the course tutor. What then can the rural development agency expect in return for what may seem to be a fairly substantial input of staff time and resources?

Perhaps the first advantage of a course-based approach is that it is a way of introducing fairly intensive work in a non-threatening way. Unlike urban models of community work where the community worker is likely to be based at a centre within the community, in rural practice this is often not possible. Indeed one of the problems of introducing a community worker in a rural patch is finding a readily accepted medium for the initial contact. In this respect, courses offer not only the initial contact, but a regular, traditional format that will be familiar to most. If the subject of the course raises a few eyebrows, at least the evening class format itself should not!

There should be no objection per se that

the approach is intensive. There is a perfectly respectable argument that intensive work in a small number of villages is more likely to have lasting benefits than a more limited involvement using other approaches in a greater number of communities. As part of a long-term programme in, say, a county, the cumulative effect of courses alongside other approaches should be very productive, and not simply for the host communities themselves. Additional benefits that might well arise from such a programme include the provision of detailed local research and case studies of community initiatives of relevance to other communities; an opportunity for the induction of less experienced rural staff and their exposure to a wide range of issues; and the introduction of an increasing number of individuals in a county to active involvement in rural development activities. This could well lead to improved levels of participation and performance in local government, on county committees and within voluntary organisations at large.

The key questions that need to be thought through by a rural development agency before it becomes involved in a particular course are whether the method of approach is appropriate for that community and, secondly, whether there is a good chance that, when completed, local people will be enabled to carry forward the outcomes of the course after the tutor and community worker have withdrawn. There will be a sense in which an 'open door' at the RCC will be a useful safety net and, at times, a help in moving further forward. However the degree of independence achieved at the end of a course will be a measure of its success.

The ways in which rural development agencies can contribute to the success of a course are discussed later in the report, especially in the section on pre-course activity.

Rural Community Councils (RCCs) are county level charities working to promote the welfare of rural communities by encouraging community self-help, local initiatives and voluntary effort. Working in partnership with other organisations, they offer advice and practical help to village hall committees, parish councils and many other groups and individuals. They are funded by the Rural Development Commission, local authorities, individual donations and grants and sponsorship from trusts and companies.

Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) are three-year strategies setting out the needs and priorities of communities within Rural Development Areas (RDAs) and proposing projects by a wide range of bodies to meet these needs. They aim to bring about co-ordinated and integrated action and represent a consensus view by the local authorities, Rural Community Councils and others who prepare the Programmes.

RDAs are those 38 areas in which the Rural Development Commission concentrates the majority of its efforts. They are chosen by factors such as high unemployment, sparse or declining population, high percentage of elderly people and poor access to services. The Commission set up the RDP System and contributes funds to many of the projects proposed in the Programmes.

EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

SETTING NEW HORIZONS

The adult educator reading this book will, by this stage, be feeling distinctly uneasy. Rural adult education has rarely been at the cutting edge of pedagogic development. Now, it seems, the

educational task is to be not just the education of a traditionally conservative population in new and radical ways, but also that of reversing the demographic decline of a century or more, *and*, while so doing, to search for solutions to difficulties in housing, transport, employment, the service sector, *and* for good measure, facing up to local political apathy. All this is to be handled in a course with a relatively open and flexible framework, involving co-operation with other agencies with whom many educators may never have had so much as a prior conversation about the weather. Such words as 'action-learning', 'agenda setting' and 'community response' will have been noted – words with political overtones which might go down well in the university or Further Education Centre, but surely not in rural Britain?

The first point to make is that rural adult education has in fact had a long, quite worthy and very relevant history. Although few British readers will be aware of it, much of the ethos behind modern adult education grew directly from rural roots. In late nineteenth century rural Denmark, the Reverend N F S Grundtvig (1783-1872) promulgated the idea of rural 'Folk High Schools' to solve the material and spiritual poverty of Danish villages. His ideas were enormously successful. The Folk High School movement spread rapidly throughout Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and now dominates adult education in those countries.[8]

Folk High Schools are hard to find in Britain, but individual ideas from that powerful movement have had important consequences here over the years. A classic example could be drawn from Cambridgeshire's pioneering 'Village College' provision of the nineteen twenties. Based on Folk High School principles, these Village Colleges have proved successful and are still in existence today. At the same time, in other parts of the country, the emerging Rural Community Council movement became involved in the development of adult education and saw the programmes of village hall construction, with which they were associated, as a central means of extending education provision. To underline the point, up until 1981, central government support for village hall construction and improvement came via the Education Ministry.

History, then, is on the side of the rural innovator; so is the educational climate of the late nineteen eighties. After many years of organic development, most of the old beliefs and norms in British education are now being questioned. Relevance, community involvement, market-led strategies, new funding sources – all of these are contemporary buzz words. Much of the new thinking has come as a result of pressure from right of centre Ministers of Education. If that worries educators to the left of the political spectrum, they should ponder a socialist criticism of British education, from the current Australian Labour Government's Minister for Science, Barry Jones:

● *'The worst thing that Australia inherited from Britain was the concept of 'the education of minimal expectations', the idea that hardly anybody is capable of doing anything; that life is essentially a spectator sport, with very few players who are any good at anything. We take it for granted that, of course the children who go through our schools won't learn to play a musical instrument, of course they won't learn foreign languages, of course they won't have much acquaintance with the great western, or indeed*

eastern, cultures, that they will have a very limited sense of what they're capable of. Also, they're conditioned to believe that if there's a pickle factory or a coal mine in town, naturally that's where they'll have to work. And the idea that people might be able to cast off their environment and to develop their own capacity to the largest extent sounds absolutely impossible to the overwhelming bulk of people. Only a small percentage of people realise their full potential." ●

The thrust of the criticisms which Barry Jones makes could be levelled at rather a lot of rural adult education in recent years. The community development courses described in this book are very different: the programmes veer rather towards 'maximum expectations', taking the view that education could be the catalyst to unlock talents which could improve many rural communities. To paraphrase the words of Ivan Illich a decade earlier, the aim is to reskill society to take on the tasks it has abandoned to 'experts' and administrators.

If, then, both history and contemporary developments give green lights to new ideas in rural adult education, is the way clear? Does the educator have a role in what some will say is the province of the community worker? Is intervention in this field justified in a world of scarce educational resources? Are there beneficial political consequences for parish councils in supporting community development courses? Do educators have the skills to give the new courses successfully?

The answer to all of these questions – with some qualifications – must be positive. Traditionally, rural community development has been the province of the local authority or the Rural Community Council. The accepted channel for grass roots involvement was, and often still is, the parish council or village hall committee. The aim of the educator in a community development course is not to supplant these agents, but to supplement and assist them.

The educator, acting as course chairman and animateur, has enormous potential. His, or her, role is politically neutral – acting neither for the 'authorities' nor for the community itself. The educator's skills in encouraging and structuring group discussion should ensure the maintenance of a successful forum for open and wide ranging debate. The educator will be expected to bring in new and sometimes unwelcome ideas – ideas which if floated by 'officialdom' might be given short shrift without consideration.

In some respects, parts of the syllabus will not be totally new. Much of the work of a course involves teaching how local and national government works, how decisions are made, how lobbying is carried out. Traditionally this is the material covered by the politics tutor in courses such as 'Local Government Today'. The differences will be one of presentation. Community development courses present these issues not as abstract ideas, but as the working tools of a successful community group. Basic knowledge of the government machine is very important. Surprisingly few people understand what many national rural agencies do, and how help can be sought from these agencies for a community. Even in this media-conscious world, many do not know how a village can make its views felt in the press or on local television. Very few parish council members realise what a valuable and dynamic force their council could become.

In some ways, therefore, community development courses are courses in government,

economics and planning made relevant to local needs. They are also exercises in confidence building, in giving people the ability to learn how to help themselves. And, they are courses in group dynamics - understanding how both your own group and other groups work, and realising how best to use the strengths which can be obtained from working together.

Community development courses can therefore be an exciting and challenging new way to teach. They can bring educators into contact with real world situations, where they can co-operate with and tap into other agencies with both expertise and funding. The practical work of the local group can stand on a par with the essays written by those old university or WEA village tutorial groups of the pre-television era.

There are, however, dangers and cautions to be noted, which will be explored in depth later. The educator cannot and must not see their role as a development agent. They are animateurs, helping communities realise their own skills, helping planners or Community Council staff gain insight into the wishes of the community. If communities do not have the desire, or the ability to help themselves, then it is not the role of the educator to carry out 'development' or change for them.

Equally, the educator cannot act as a political agent, favouring one form of change at the expense of another. Impartiality and balance may be very difficult to achieve, but it must be the goal. Sometimes, the animateur may feel that the group will be making a mistake by following a course of action which he or she does not feel is exactly the right one. An example from real life will explain. A community development course group had seen the need to set up a local charity in order to fund a proposed heritage centre. The tutor had explained the status of charities, their advantages and disadvantages, and the ways in which the Charity Commissioners exercise tight control of all charities to ensure their priviliges are not taken too far. The model Civic Society constitution from the Civic Trust was put forward as the answer to the group's needs. But the group felt that this was unnecessarily restrictive, and took an alternative, much wider, 'Common Good' trust structure, used by another community many years earlier. The tutor felt uneasy about this approach.

Nevertheless the group, using the 'Common Good' constitution, applied to the Charity Commissioners - and their application was turned down. Much time was lost, yet in many ways this was a very valuable part of the educational process - not because it proved the tutor right, but because the group learnt much about charity law by their mistake.

Learning by experience, by trying ideas in practice, is therefore very much part of action-learning. However, the educator cannot be absolutely amoral. Having encouraged a group to look at the community's potential future, it is necessary to have a strong sense of responsibility. No-one would thank any educational agency which allowed a village to embark on a disastrous line of action without warning it very clearly of dangers to come.

One other word of warning needs to be issued. Rural community development courses can be incredibly fascinating. Tutors should beware of spending too much time on any one course, and of becoming too involved in that community. The tutor's role is to help a group begin to understand its own dynamics and its own potential. That process will go on long after the course is over - without the tutor. Like the

schoolteacher who sees his protégés go out into the real world, and goes on to the next year's children, so the adult educator must learn to go on to help the next community confront its problems. The wrench of moving on may be considerable, but it is very necessary for both sides.

If all these questions are considered, the rewards and spin-offs from community involvement can be very great. Academics who also teach non-adult students will find their other teaching and research work enriched by real world experience. Educational agencies should gain the respect of hitherto doubting and wary politicians and public figures. In a world of scarce resources that could be very valuable indeed. Above all, the community development experience, because of its challenging and open ended, open curriculum nature, can be a very satisfying one, providing a valuable fillip to what many, if pressed, would admit to being a somewhat jaded teaching life.

8. 'Grundtvig and the Folk High School Movement' by Roar Skovmand in *N F S Grundtvig: Tradition and Renewal* (1983) edited by C Thouberg and A Thyssen, The Danish Institute.

WHO ARE THE PROVIDERS?

There are three main groups of adult education providers in Britain who could be involved in community development classes.

The Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are the largest providers of adult education across the country. Although each LEA operates under the terms of the 1944 Education Act, services vary considerably from authority to authority. In some areas, community schools and colleges are the organisational bases; in others, further education (FE) college adult studies departments; whilst in many places, a series of area principal officers administer the system. A very wide range of subjects is offered. Some authorities are more generously funded than others and some are more adventurous in their programme planning.

The Workers' Education Association (WEA) was founded in 1903 to stimulate and satisfy the demands of workers for education, and to use education to provide for their individual and social development. Despite its historic name, members of WEA courses do not have to be workers in any way, nor is the organisation particularly left of centre; it is in fact non-party political and non-sectarian. The WEA is recognised by the Department of Education and Science (DES) as a 'Responsible Body' under the 1944 Act. Within England and Wales it has twenty Districts (and more in Scotland), each with full time staff. These Districts assist the nine hundred local branches, which are usually administered on an honorary basis, to provide an adult education programme. The WEA often works closely with LEAs and the Universities.

Universities have been involved in adult education since the 1860's. Since the 1944 Education Act, most universities have had an extra-mural department providing courses for the public. The entire country is covered by a series of different catchment areas for specific universities – although these catchment areas will be less closely defined from 1990 onwards. Together, the universities have five hundred full time adult education staff, plus some eight thousand part timers. To complicate matters, adult education departments in universities are known by many different names, including 'Extra-Mural studies', 'Adult Education', 'Continuing Education', 'Extension Studies', 'External Studies', etc, etc!

Of these groups of providers, which would

be most interested in rural community development through adult education? There is no easy answer to this question as much will depend on local circumstances. In some areas the WEA is very keen to try out new ideas, especially if it can be shown that they will alleviate social and economic deprivation. In other places, a university might help; the staff of the internal Geography or Planning department could be particularly interested in co-operating with the Extra-Mural department in rural work. Some rural local authorities have proved very successful innovators in the past; authorities with well-developed community school and college systems have often been sympathetic to new curricula.

An umbrella organisation for adult education in England and Wales is provided by the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE), 19B, De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE. If the reader cannot make contact with any of the three groups of providers, then NIACE may be able to advise. See also *The Year Book of Adult Continuing Education - A Directory of Organisations*, an annual publication from NIACE.

A word of caution: all adult education providers are going through a difficult phase of readjustment and restructuring. Partly this is because traditional types of work are being questioned, with increasing emphasis being given to targeting special groups, and to vocational training. Partly it is because budgets are tightening, and courses must very often now be self financing. This background must be understood when approaching educational providers. All is not gloom, however. Some educationalists will use the stresses of change to rule out new directions; others will, on the contrary, seize the opportunity to try out new ideas, especially if they can be shown to be relevant to the needs of the region and community.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-COURSE: THE PLANNING GROUP

HOW TO START

The first move towards the establishment of a course may come from any one of several directions. As we have discussed, it may be that an educational provider sees this as an interesting area of activity to include in its programme and is therefore promoting the approach. Equally a Rural Community Council may have identified a particular community or group of communities where it feels such an intensive method would be appropriate. Even better, the host community may have identified itself by putting in a bid for the course, although this is only really likely to happen if a programme of courses has already become established. However it is the very best way to start.

There are probably as many ways of preparing for a course as there are courses. Fortunately the main stages of preparation can be readily identified and what follows is a summary of the chief responsibilities of course organisers. Our suggestions are based upon an assumed organising partnership between an adult education provider, perhaps a WEA branch, Local Education Authority or a University Extra-Mural department, and a local rural development agency, perhaps a Rural Community Council or a Rural Development Area team. Although such a partnership is definitely recommended, in certain circumstances the main responsibilities may fall to just one party, in which case some modification will be needed. Matters which particularly concern the education provider – finding a tutor and other resources – are dealt with later in this chapter (page 31).

FORMING A PLANNING GROUP

The formation of a planning group at an early stage, meeting however informally, will be a great asset. This will very likely be centred on one or other of the principal organisers but may include any number of other interested parties. It may well be advantageous if certain agencies are involved from the start, so they may feel that the course is at least in part their initiative. This will be especially true of those agencies likely to be concerned with follow-up support of initiatives developed by a course once the formal sessions are over. Be careful though, there may be certain parties whose visible involvement might prove to be disadvantageous to the successful launch of a course, perhaps because of public perception of their likely influence over it. In this respect a known education provider can usually perform the vital function of being seen to be sufficiently independent of local political influences. Knowledge of local factors will obviously be at a premium throughout the planning stage.

Planning Group at work.

AGREEING OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Before embarking upon detailed preparatory work, members of the planning group will need to agree their overall objectives in running a course, making sure that the various parties involved are in accord. As an example one such set of objectives, established at a recent RAE training workshop, ran as follows:

AIMS OF A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COURSE

- to promote an intelligent understanding of the community;
- to encourage the confidence to bring about changes perceived as important;
- to stimulate practical initiatives.

Variants of these have been seen in the preparation for courses that have already occurred around the country, for example:

- 'to form a number of study groups to explore issues, problems and needs relevant to their own communities through an adult education process;
- to help strengthen the identity of the local communities;
- to encourage the initiation of practical projects of direct relevance and benefit to the communities.' (Derbyshire)

and:

- 'to give participants the personal confidence and knowledge to enable them to become more active members of their communities and to work collectively;
- to provide a course whose content would give practical results in the communities involved through discussing and learning about issues of immediate local relevance and by placing that local experience within a wider district, county and national context.' (Shropshire)

The key features of these statements have been the aim of promoting greater participation through courses, and the potential of practical achievements arising for the lasting benefit of the host community.

Having discussed and agreed overall objectives, the group should decide whether two or more courses should be run simultaneously and, for each, give attention to:

- choosing the right location for the course;
- pre-course publicity and preparation;
- finding a proficient tutor and providing back-up resources for the course;
- the funding of the course.

These questions are dealt with in turn in the remaining part of this chapter.

PROS AND CONS OF A MULTIPLE PROGRAMME

Running a single course, especially for the first time, can be demanding; the running of two courses (or even possibly three) in tandem may not be much more demanding, especially if some of the personnel concerned remain the same. It is therefore worth considering holding more than a single course at any one time. There is also the argument that if one course fails to attract sufficient interest, and has to close, then all is not lost!

A programme of courses need not conform to any specific administrative boundaries; indeed a programme within the catchment area of an education provider such as a University Extra-Mural Department or a WEA branch, crossing district and county boundaries, can work very well. However courses should not be undertaken lightly, and for, say, a single county, a maximum of three at any one time should be sufficient. Apart from the demands of resourcing each course, there is also the desirability of developing a programme of courses over a few years, allowing communities to become involved at the right moment for them and to put in a bid for a course based upon their perception of what has been achieved elsewhere. This then takes us on to the question of choosing the location for a course.

CHOOSING LOCATIONS FOR COURSES

Choosing the right location may well be the single most important ingredient in ensuring that all the time and effort put into a course bears fruit. It is difficult to draw any hard and fast rules about the nature of communities where courses are likely to be productive. For example it might seem self-evident that there is a population level below which a course cannot be sustained, but invariably such rules are confounded by experience! You should expect to be able to attract a larger proportion of smaller communities, but, other than that, local circumstances will be the determining factor.

Course organisers are often tempted to put on a course in one community believing that it will act as a centre for its neighbouring parishes, and therefore ensure a good turn out. There have been some examples of this happening successfully, but there are associated complications:

- the resulting diffuse focus of the course;
- uneven representation of the various communities participating because people within walking distance are more likely to attend;
- a greater difficulty in involving all members of the group in course business, especially parochial concerns.

A variation is to concentrate on a pair of neighbouring communities: notably successful where the two contrast in a useful fashion without undue rivalry!

What are the guiding principles in choosing a location? As well as receiving a positive response from the community concerned, course organisers will want to be sure that there is both a need for development activity (this would usually be expressed in terms of topical issues of concern to the local community) and the opportunity to make progress in certain directions. Thus there can be said to be a critical balance to be judged between **need** and **opportunity.**

It may well be easier to establish the need for a course than assess opportunities for practical action (which should unfold as a course progresses). Apart from consulting members of the communities themselves and their elected representatives, a variety of professionals exist whose views on relevant issues of local concern should be useful in determining need. These would obviously include planners, community workers and local authority staff responsible in specific areas likely to be of concern such as housing or the environment, but might also include several others, such as clergy, teachers or medical staff. These advisers may also prove to be useful contacts as potential contributors to the course (see 'Using Guest Speakers', page 68).

However some indication of the opportunity to achieve practical results will also be required before starting, and the kind of positive factors to look for are:

- the presence of one or two enthusiasts in the community: they can make all the difference;
- the knowledge that resources are likely to be available to help advance projects once begun, perhaps from a local Rural Development Area budget or local initiatives fund;
- a community education presence in the area;
- a generally supportive attitude on the part of external authorities;
- the presence of a local community worker/fieldworker, perhaps especially likely within a Rural Development Area.

This is not to say that a course should be

some kind of easy option only carried out in extremely favourable circumstances – indeed some apparently unpromising starts have led to successful outcomes – but rather that, for the first one or two courses, care should be taken to establish the potential for achievements. Perhaps the worst outcome of a course would be for it to have been merely a 'talk-shop'. Once the method has been shown to have relevance, then perhaps what are perceived to be more difficult challenges should be taken on.

On a more mundane level, organisers will need to be concerned about the *practicalities* of running a course in a certain location: the meeting place, the right evening of the week (or other appropriate time) and the right forms of publicity. These practical points are taken up later in this section but, in summary, the main aspects of preparatory work that need to be undertaken prior to a course starting are:

- the need to establish a positive response to, and formal request for, the course;
- the need to discover any particular problems, worries or opportunities in that community and to leave space for these to emerge;
- the need to be aware of any groups or personalities which might conflict or cause problems.

A TIMETABLE FOR PRE-COURSE ACTIVITY

However the final choice of location is made, it will need to be substantiated well in advance of an intended start date. The preparation timetable which follows shows the lead-in time required for preparing for a course, assuming that everything runs smoothly. It is important that all parties realise the length of time required to do this adequately, not because a great volume of activity will be required throughout this period, but because certain stages need to be reached in good time. Preparations for the course, especially within the host community, can then develop at their own pace.

FITTING IN WITH ACADEMIC SCHEDULES

Education, as everyone who has survived school will know, is a law and system beholden only to itself! Educationalists emphasise this fact by operating their own year, quite different to the calendar year, or the financial year.

This year begins in early autumn, with most adult education courses beginning in the last week of September, or the first week of October. There are then about ten potential teaching weeks before Christmas sets in. The January to Easter term provides another ten weeks, and usually another four to five weeks can be fitted in after this before gardening (or farming activities) claim the attention of class members in the evenings.

To be successful, community development courses should, if possible, adhere to the convention of the early autumn start. It is possible to start after Christmas, in early January, but the chances of success may be reduced. Bad weather (or fear of bad weather) deters many from new ventures outside the house in January, and some potential members may have already signed up for courses which span the entire winter.

OUTLINE TIMETABLE FOR A COURSE STARTING IN OCTOBER AND FINISHING IN MARCH

January/February: Initial discussion about choice of location/tutor/resources. Ideally choice should be part of a rolling programme

of provision. If so, sort out incoming bids from communities for a course alongside other options (eg fieldworker's suggestions).

March: Assemble relevant material on most likely locations (eg contact lists, planning documents, RCC records etc).

April: Choose location of course(s) (keeping others in reserve).

May/June: Probable deadline for educational body's main brochure. Consider an address to Annual Parish Meeting. Continue **informal** contact.

July: Hold informal meeting in parish to discuss course in general, and critical details such as the distribution of publicity, likely best time for course sessions and so on. Be careful not to pre-empt first night of course in discussions. Make exploratory contact with possible contributors.

August: Catch up on any of the above you should have done by now! Beware holiday lags. Publicity leaflet should be designed and prepared for distribution by now.

September: Distribute leaflet two or three weeks ahead of course and issue press release the week before. Decide whether to set up prior enrolment system.

October/December: First part of course. If insufficient enrolment closes course, consider falling back to reserve choice, start in January/ February after the Christmas holiday.

January: Write to each course member in good time prior to restart of course. Restart course and run on into March.

PUBLICISING A COURSE AND LOCAL LIAISON

Adult and community education providers usually produce their own publicity to a regular timetable and have a well established network of outlets for this, including distribution via public libraries and mailings to regular participants. Although this type of publicity can contribute a great deal, it should really only be regarded as the icing on the cake of a very thorough local publicity campaign in the host community by the course organisers themselves.

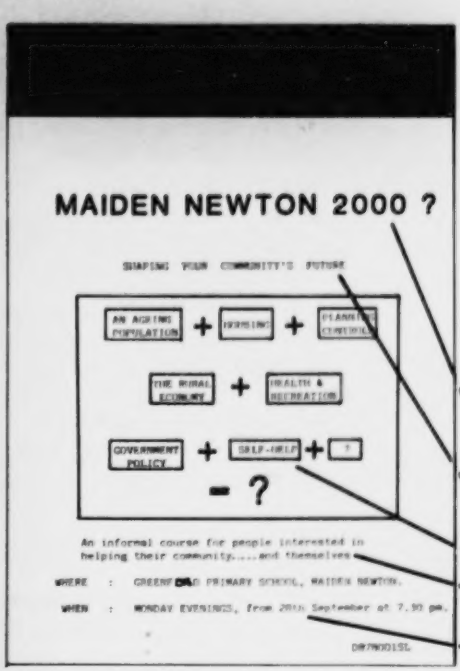
The best publicity is word of mouth and the aim should be to get people in the community concerned talking about the course in anticipation. Surprisingly often, one person's attendance is dependent upon another's. "I'll go if you go" is a common enough expression heard at this stage.

Successful local publicity campaigns have generally been centred on the distribution of a folded leaflet (doubling as a poster when opened out). Where possible this has gone to every household in the community a short period (perhaps two to three weeks) before the start of a course, preceded by a series of informal contacts. Full use is made of local newsletters, shop windows, noticeboards and other opportunities for making public announcements. Just before the course is due to start, a press release should be issued to the local media. (Guidance on preparing press releases is contained in Appendix D). In larger populations leaflet distribution to every household may not be possible, but some parts of the community should be targeted and advantage taken of the more comprehensive opportunities that usually exist. This might, for example, mean involving a secondary school based in the community in leaflet distribution. Indeed a local school might well be interested in becoming associated with the course in a more substantial way and this could follow from an initial approach to help publicise the course.

THE COURSE LEAFLET

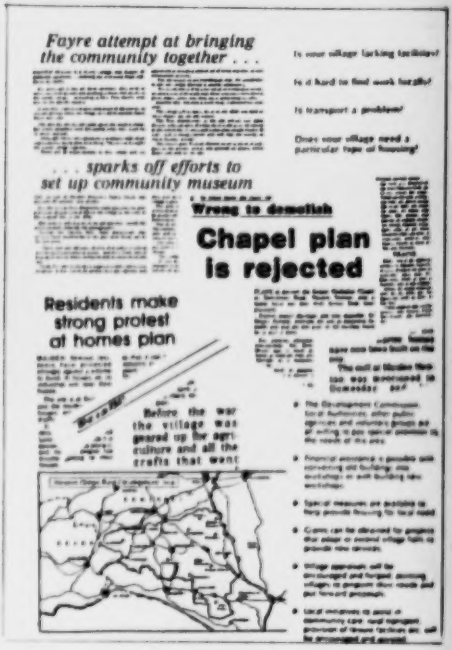
The form of the leaflet is important and will require careful thought. It should both carry references to familiar issues and the specific locality of the course as well as suggest flexibility and opportunities for achieving practical results. It should do this without implying that participants will have to devote all their free time in the coming year to achieve something! The example below, from Maiden Newton in Dorset, illustrates several points.

MAIDEN NEWTON LEAFLET:
Front Cover



Back Cover

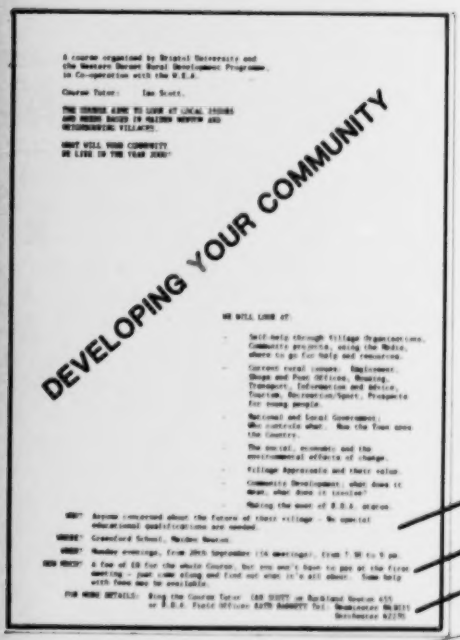
- As in the course itself, cuttings from the local press, and especially strong headlines, are useful in creating a sense of local identity and local ownership of the course. A collage such as this can introduce a number of issues in an interesting way.


Fayre attempt at bringing the community together . . .
. . . sparks off efforts to set up community museum
Wrong to demolish
Chapel plan is rejected
Residents make strong protest at homes plan
Before the war the village was geared up for agriculture and all the crafts that went

- Indicates that the course is specific to locality, yet also open-ended.
- Gently offers involvement.
- Intriguing presentation of issues?
- Stresses personal as well as communal perspective.
- More detail.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Inside leaflet (can be used as a poster)



DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY

A course organised by Bristol University and the Western Dorset Rural Development Programme, in Co-operation with the W.E.A.

Course Tutor: Ian Scott.

THE COURSE AIMS TO LOOK AT LOCAL ISSUES AND NEEDS BASED IN VALLEY WESTON AND NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES.

WHAT WILL YOUR COMMUNITY BE LIKE IN THE YEAR 2000?

WE WILL LOOK AT:

- Self-help through Village Organisations, Community projects, using the Media, where to go for help and resources.
- Current rural issues: Employment, Shops and Post Offices, Housing, Transport, Information and Advice, Tourism, Recreation/Sport, Prospects for young people.
- National and Local Government, who controls what. How the Town sees the Country.
- The social, economic and the environmental effects of change.
- Village Appraisals and their value.
- Community Development, what does it mean, what does it involve?
- Making the most of B.B.C. stories.

WHO? Anyone concerned about the future of their village - No special educational qualifications are needed.

WHERE? Cranesford School, Valley Weston.

WHEN? Twelve evenings, from 20th September (14 meetings). From 7.30 to 9 pm.

HOW MUCH? A fee of £8 for the whole Course, but you don't have to pay at the first meeting - just come along and find out what it's all about. Some help with fares may be available.

FOR MORE DETAILS: Ring the Course Tutor (Ian Scott on Rockland Weston 455 or W.E.A. Field Officer Kath Bennett Tel: Shoalcester 84311 Dorchester 62278)

- Stresses that previous academic experience is not required.
- Subsidised fee, and opportunity to sample. Discretion to waive fee.
- Contact **both** tutor and local fieldworker.

Local life

KENT VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL

WEARDALE:
FUTURE CHOICES?

WHERE? STANHOPE COMMUNITY CENTRE (THE OLD POLICE STATION)

WHEN? THURSDAYS 7-30-9-30p.m. STARTING 23rd SEPTEMBER

29

Publicity leaflets for other courses.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Perhaps as important as the format of the leaflet is the way its distribution can be used to win friends for the course in the community before it starts. We have already mentioned the desirability of finding those one or two likely enthusiasts who can make a great contribution to ensuring the success of a course. There is no better way to approach such people than to ask their advice on how publicity might most effectively be framed and distributed. This is a far less threatening approach than to ask for their full involvement in the course itself before they are fully aware of what this may involve. Also useful will be their suggestions about likely volunteers to help with distribution of the leaflets!

However, just as we have noticed how some people tend to feel more comfortable enrolling on a course if they know someone else who will attend, in a small community the reverse can apply. It is possible that the active involvement of an individual beforehand in promoting the course could put others off. This is where prior knowledge of the community and discreet enquiries will help, and if in doubt avoid any over-close alignment with any one party before a course. This is especially important if there is a major issue of contention in the community and the course is in danger of becoming associated with one or other side of the argument. On the whole, though, our experience has been that there are usually people to whom one can turn for assistance in the community with pre-course publicity, people who see the potential benefits of a course in broad terms and enthuse in a way that encourages others to join in.

PRE-COURSE MEETINGS

Such people become the ideal focus for local pre-course preparation and may well agree to bring together a group of likely participants on an informal basis a few months beforehand to assist the course organisers. An informal gathering such as this will be able to advise on the most suitable venue and time for the course, and to give the tutor advance notice of local issues that are likely to arise during the course itself.

A question that may well arise at this stage is whether it would be a good thing to organise a more formal public meeting some time ahead of the course itself to present the possibilities of a course, what it might entail and how it might benefit the local community.

There is, however, one problem with this. There needs to be great care taken with such a pre-course presentation not to sample material that will be used in the course itself in a way that might prejudice that material. Much of this, for example the introductory technique of constructing a scenario of life in the community in ten years time (see page 62) depends upon unfamiliarity for its impact. Ideally the first night of the course itself should be the best display of the course's potential and participants should be free to do their 'sampling' then.

For this reason pre-course meetings need to be clearly distinguished from the course itself and designed accordingly. They should not be over academic in content, though they should have something interesting and specific to say to the host community. Above all they should be an **occasion**. There is a great deal of latent feeling about the local parish in many communities which can be tapped. Indeed a celebration of the vitality and very existence of the community should be one of the main attractions of the course itself, which can be suggested in an introductory meeting.

One answer may be to invite an

independent party to review what community development courses have had to offer other communities. This could be done by a representative of the organising educational agency responsible or, alternatively, by a participant from a previous course. Another successful approach has been to attach an introduction to the course to a screening of local archive film, or, in one case, to the premiere of a locally made video film.

Many courses have been launched quite successfully without such a formal pre-course public meeting and this is another area where local judgement will be at a premium. However one advantage of a pre-course gathering, whether formal or informal, is the opportunity it offers for prior enrolments to be made; it certainly is reassuring to approach the first night of the course with a dozen or so enrolments already registered. The start of a course can also be heralded by an exhibition of rural development material, by articles in the press and some references to the course on local broadcast media where these exist.

LOCAL LIAISON

In addition to these aspects of preparation that publicise a course to the community as a whole and aim to attract the interest of likely participants, there will also be a need for contacts to be made methodically right across the community. Course organisers and the tutor will want to approach the course start date confident that the major local village organisations have been approached in a way appropriate to each and that there are as many friends and allies for the course in the community as possible. This is skilled work which should, ideally, be undertaken by a community worker with established contacts in the community.

It is also possible during this stage that informal enquiries may suggest contributors for the course. The best person to make a presentation on a particular subject may well be somebody who has actually been involved in a similar endeavour on another occasion rather than the 'expert' who has studied the subject. Such a possibility might be suggested to the community worker at this point. Ideally during this preparatory stage the community worker will prepare a register of resources available for the course and of issues that his/her contacts have revealed to be of local concern. A slim folder containing this information together with any relevant planning, census, policy or other material is invaluable for tutors as they prepare for their course. Back issues of local newsletters can be a mine of information!

A final point on the preparatory stages in the community is that what may seem to be a fairly unpromising initial reaction can quite suddenly come right. These initial soundings cannot be rushed and often take time to bear fruit.

RESOURCES REQUIRED BY EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

It is not an easy or straightforward task for the educational provider to set up a community development course. A wide range of resources – both financial and human – are required. Compared to traditional adult education, the costs are great. As a tool for social and economic development, however, the investment is not enormous and the long-term gains can be considerable. The use of the words 'long-term' is not fortuitous. The aim of the courses is to break the dependency syndrome which afflicts many communities: in the long-term these objectives

should save the public purse considerable sums.

FINDING A TUTOR AND WORKING WITH OTHERS

Financial resources are important and are covered in the next section ('The Course Budget'), but the number one resource is the course tutor, followed by collaborators from other agencies and lastly people in the community itself.

The **tutor** is the lynch pin of the entire system. He or she is ideally required to be a Super Person. Well versed in the history, economics and sociology of rural Britain over the last century, the tutor must be a dynamic and flexible teacher and handler of groups. The tutor must be friendly and helpful towards the quieter class members while carefully controlling the more extrovert participants. Sufficient leadership must be given to stimulate the group to action; sufficient modesty must be displayed to allow the group to do 'its own thing' and keep the credit for itself. While sensitive to local, group and individual feelings, the tutor must be strong enough to cope with a variety of pressures from the group, from outsiders, from the press and elsewhere. Many forms of change in rural areas will be resisted and criticised whether the changes are for good or bad. And as to what is good or bad – that is a difficult question!

Where are these paragons of intellectual, social and pedagogic virtue to be found? Many are already functioning as adult education tutors, full or part-time and, with some extra work, can adapt to the ideas in this book. There are, however, many other sources. Quite a number of people have been involved in rural community work of various kinds and have 'retired' from full-time activity in this field. They are often interested in using some of their old skills in new and part-time ways. Many are women who are coming back into part-time work after having children. A second area to consider includes teachers, eg from the Social Science departments of secondary schools, and academics from university Geography or Planning departments who may be interested in gaining 'hands on', 'real world' experience. The basic requirements are background knowledge, skill at teaching and group handling, an adventurous spirit, enjoyment of 'live' experiences, and the ability to work with others.

The **collaborators** from other agencies are usually drawn from Rural Community Councils, Rural Development Area field staff, or special project officers attached to County or District Planning Offices. They too require to be Super Persons! Their roles are, however, different from the tutor's. In the beginning, they need the local knowledge and contacts to be able to assess the suitability of the settlement for a course, and to find out who, in the community, must be contacted and persuaded to back the course and/or to attend. They must help the publicity process. While the course is running they must act as an additional pair of eyes and ears for the tutor, picking up reactions to suggestions made, passing on praise/criticism, assessing progress with the tutor week by week. When the group is at the stage of embarking on a project they must provide some help – but only when the group is ready: it must be a grass roots initiative, largely developed by the group. Finally, the collaborators will probably have some long-term responsibility for the community when the course is over. Summing up, the collaborators act in many cases as three way co-ordinators between the tutor, the group/community and the 'authorities'.

The **community** itself is usually a massive untapped and unco-ordinated resource. Although

there are many ways to serve the community – parish council, scout/guide leader, Women's Institute, etc – few (not even the parish council) concentrate solely on the future of their villages. Within any one group, the tutor will find a wide range of abilities available to assist future developments – people with good contacts, with graphic designing or writing skills, builders or good organisers. The Super Persons in the community are usually already there, awaiting only the chance, the guidance and co-ordination to bring them to the fore. And the rural community is changing, bringing in new people and new skills all the time.

THE COURSE BUDGET

Community development courses are not cheap, but they can be very good value. Given goodwill and ingenuity, sufficient funding can usually be found. The secret lies in combining funding resources between agencies.

Why do community development courses cost more to run than conventional adult education courses? Firstly, much more preparation is involved; finding out about the community, publicising the rather special nature of the course, and selling it to a sceptical population beyond the enthusiasts who may have requested the course. Secondly, community development courses have rarely been run at the full student fee (ie they require subsidy). Conventional courses could crudely be defined as of two types – vocational or escapism/enjoyment. In both cases the student gains personally. Community development courses are different: the focus of course work is the general good of the community. Indirectly the student may benefit and the course may be enjoyable, but there is a difference in emphasis and appeal. Furthermore, it is important that a cross-section of the community attends such a course, including those who would not be able to afford a full fee. Experience has shown that tutors' follow-up work can be considerable, and this has to be paid for. Often what are in effect small 'tutorial' classes have to be given to assist progress on practical projects. Finally the projects themselves can be greatly assisted if a small 'seed fund' is available. This fund can be used to help the group visit a location in the next county as a field trip to gain practical experience, or to fund the initial run of a promotional leaflet, or indeed, to help pump prime the initial stages of the development of any interesting line of activity resulting from course work. (The funding of projects is discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4.)

For all these reasons, therefore, community development courses can cost up to twice the normal rate of expenditure. Further costs can be incurred if a tutor has to travel a long distance to a remote rural location, or if a guest speaker requires payment. How can these costs be met?

The funding of adult education varies from agency to agency, and is, in any case,

changing almost annually at the moment. But, to generalise, a conventional course, charging conventional fees of about £2 per ninety minute session per student can survive if there are at least fifteen students. In addition to student fees, the local authority, the Department of Education and Science or the Universities Funding Council will pay a premium per student of about £1 per session. This therefore covers the basic tuition. The additional funds must come from outside the educational system.

A number of sources have proved helpful in the past. In some cases parish councils have contributed. In other cases local 'initiative funds' from the Rural Community Councils have been used. The Rural Development Commission has been supportive, either directly or via its Rural Development Programmes. District or County Council aid, donations from charities and trusts, even contributions from the private sector - all are possibilities which have been explored successfully.

At 1989 prices, an absolute minimum additional sum of £500 per course is required, broken down as follows in a typical case:

Subsidy to course fee for 15 students (reduction to £8 from £20)	£180
Additional work by the tutor in preparation and tutorials	£160
Seed fund to help local project work	£160
	£500

It should be stressed that these are minimum sums. However they are not so enormous as they may appear at first glance. It must be realised that the mounting of a single planning exhibition in a village, or the hiring of a consultant for three days to advise on a village planning scheme would cost an equal sum without necessarily securing any spin off to the community, and little long term community development. With these courses, each side - educationalists and the rural development people - benefits from the contribution of the other. Even if the parish council does not contribute, the community itself does - both by the fees participants pay, and by their work on practical projects. Thus, in funding, as in the work of the courses, agencies and people learn to co-operate for the good of the community as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

PRE-COURSE: THE TUTOR

ESSENTIAL PREPARATION

Apart from joining in the work of the planning group, especially in local research, the tutor will want to prepare sufficient educational material in advance of the course, and assess personal strengths and weaknesses for the job. We stress throughout that courses should be flexible and responsive to course members' interests and experiences; tutors will therefore need to be prepared to tackle a very broad range of rural issues and have a good grasp of their inter-relationship. Some issues will best be dealt with by formal presentation, either by the tutor or a guest speaker, others more informally using the resources of the group itself; but all will require preparation.

In case this sounds daunting, it is worth emphasising that the main quality required of a tutor is being prepared to follow lines of enquiry alongside course members, rather than seeing themselves always leading from the front! This touches upon a crucial skill required of the tutor, that of knowing when some direction and stimulus is required and when it is best to allow course members room themselves to pursue lines of enquiry in their own way. With the scope of this type of course being as broad as it is, the format will only really achieve its potential if maximum flexibility is allowed for. Weaknesses on the tutor's part in any specific area likely to arise during the course can usually be covered by supporting contributions from guest speakers. The important thing is for the tutor to recognise potential weaknesses well ahead and plan accordingly.

Many tutors will already be familiar with at least some of the main rural topics identified in this chapter. With two exceptions, they appear in summary note form followed by a brief digest of possible reference sources related to each one. This is by no means an all inclusive list of the ground that might be covered by a course, nor of the related reference material, but it should suggest the possible breadth. It may be helpful also at this stage to read the brief section on setting the course agenda (page 61), as this indicates a way of linking prepared material with the expressed interests of course members right at the start of the course.

The exceptions to the note form in which the main topics appear are the last two sections in the chapter. These are devoted to relationships with the world beyond the village (especially ways of handling the media and negotiating and lobbying for resources), and to comparative views of community development. Regarding the former, course groups in a sophisticated world need to be able to use media attention to their advantage and to lobby effectively for resources for their projects. We have therefore drawn upon some of the experiences of course groups to highlight various approaches. Without going into any great depth, the last section suggests ways in which the concept of community development might be presented to a course group and then followed through as the course progresses. Indeed tutors should be prepared for discussion about the nature of community development even before the start, in response to pre-course publicity. It is a relatively unfamiliar term and likely, as the subject of the course, to lead to some searching enquiries from possible course members! Apart from a general understanding of the term, it will also be useful for tutors to think through the implications of a community development perspective for each of the main rural issues which follow in this chapter. To assist in this we have included within the material on community

development an illustration of community development principles in practice, in relation to village halls.

PROGRAMMING

A general concern of this chapter is the way that individual topics can be combined to make a balanced programme for the whole course. Perhaps the best way for the prospective tutor to approach this important question is to consider some of the contrasting programmes included in Appendix B, remembering that these are viewed with the benefit of hindsight. Almost certainly they would not have had anything like the detail that they now contain at earlier stages. This raises a fundamental point on programming: the extent to which the tutor should arrive at the first night of a course with a planned programme clearly established. Although the answer to this question will vary from tutor to tutor and course to course, we would strongly encourage the tutor to form a clear idea of the likely *shape* of the course at this point without deciding the content. As we shall see when looking more closely at the main subject matter that might be included in a course (the remaining part of this chapter) and the various techniques for use during a course (the next chapter), the responsibility for steering the course into directions relevant to the host community is in the end one shared between course members and the tutor. If you consider the impossibility of standardising the content of a community development course to be of relevance to greatly contrasting communities, then the importance of flexibility and negotiation between all members of the course becomes clear.

TRAINING

The role of the tutor is crucial to the development and success of the course. Yet often tutors have little experience in one of the two main aspects of the job: either they are well versed in rural issues but lacking in experience in adult education, or they are experienced tutors with little knowledge of rural affairs. The latter case is the easier to deal with: there is plenty of material available on rural issues which can be drawn upon (see following section). But for those who have no previous experience as an adult education tutor there is a harder task ahead. Training opportunities as such are very limited, although it is certainly worth exploring what might be available through local adult education providers: The LEA, WEA, TUC, REPLAN etc do offer opportunities, sometimes at a regional level. It is certainly worth exploring the kinds of courses which the RCC movement, both locally and through ACRE, is able to offer. Any of these agencies may respond positively to a specific demand for training, either directly or by helping others to set up an appropriate opportunity. It is a new field and training is only slowly emerging.

Useful written material is available, but generally tends to be linked to packages of activities and materials prepared for certain courses. Most work seems to have been done for women's groups and much of this is well worth looking at, even though some of the material to which it is linked may seem rather irrelevant.

It is so important to think through the course and your role in it as tutor that we would recommend some very early reading, which will help at least to identify some of the challenges and areas at which you may have to work hardest.

Some Useful Training References:

Leading a Group - A workshop for group leaders using Community Education packs (1986) Open

University (in particular see 'Group Notes')

Self help learning groups: a practical guide for organisers (1985) by Maggie Falshaw, National Extension College.

Women and Health: Activities and materials for use in women's health courses and discussion groups (1986) WEA (North West District)/Health Education Council (see 'Notes for Tutors' pages 8-21).

Adults Learning (1977) by Jennifer Rogers, Open University.

Manual for Action: Techniques to enable groups engaged in action for change to increase their effectiveness (revised edition 1982) by Martin Jelfs, revised by S Merritt, Action Resources Group.

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM

THE MAIN TOPICS AND REFERENCE SOURCES

As we have seen, the scope for introducing subject matter into the course is very wide and depends on careful planning and negotiation with course members. What follows is therefore a guide in note form to some of the main topics which may play a part in a course curriculum, each followed by a summary of some of the reference sources which should assist a related presentation. Most of the reference sources mentioned should be fairly readily available, but in the event of any difficulty, ACRE's librarian should be able to help. We should emphasise that these suggestions are only meant to be a starting point for tutors' own research.

The guide is divided into the following sections:

1. The course in context (nationally)
   (a) a review of the history of rural development in England.
   (b) topical references
   (c) future scenarios
2. The course in context (locally)
3. Perceptions of the countryside and of rural communities
4. The main contemporary rural issues
   (a) rural housing
   (b) rural employment
   (c) agriculture and land use
   (d) rural deprivation
   (e) rural services
   (f) rural transport
   (g) health and community care
   (h) the environment
5. In the village
   (a) village based organisations
   (b) aspects of local research
6. The world beyond the village
   (a) handling the media
   (b) negotiating and lobbying
   (c) negotiating to resource projects
7. Comparative views of community development

1. THE COURSE IN CONTEXT (NATIONALLY)

a) A Review of the History of Rural Development in England and Present Measures

To cover a variety of forms of intervention, past and present, in rural areas, highlighting landmark events such as the founding of the Development Commission and the 1947 Planning Acts. There follows a simplified chronology that was provoked by such a discussion. What have been the aims of intervention? What approaches have been most successful? For whom? How are present government responsibilities divided between social and economic priorities and in what ways do resulting policies differ? What bearing do policies have on community development? Why is there not a Ministry of Rural Affairs?

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND

A selection of key events and legislation this century.

1907 Founding of the **Agricultural Workers' Union**.
Formation of the **Country Landowners' Association**.
Reconstruction of the **National Trust** by Act of Parliament (launched 1895).

1908 Founding of the **National Farmers' Union**.

1909 Creation of the **Development Commission** via the Development & Road Improvement Act.

1917 Founding of the **National Federation of Womens' Institutes**.

1919 Creation of the **Forestry Commission** via the Forestry Act.
The **Agriculture and Fisheries Act** leads to each county setting up agricultural committees which include responsibility for developing rural industries and social life within their terms of reference. Alongside this the Development Commission introduces its **Rural Industries Intelligence Bureau**. Founding of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) - later becomes the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) - and its influential Rural Department.

1920 First **Rural Community Council** set up, in Oxfordshire. RCCs soon become a national movement with twenty four established by 1937; initially these were supported by the Carnegie Trust and local education authorities with the Development Commission becoming an increasingly significant contributor, providing core funding from 1937 onwards.

1924 Origins of support for **village hall development**.
Through the 1920s, development of activity in the **adult education** field with, for example, the work of the WEA extending, and the funding of rural libraries by the Carnegie Trust.

1926 Founding of the **Council for the Preservation (now Protection) of Rural England**.

1930 Formation of the **National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs**.

1932 Creation of the **Milk Marketing Board**.

1935 Founding of the **Ramblers Association**.

1942 **The Scott Report**, a major influence on post-war planning, notably protection of agricultural land and introduction of development control.

1944 **Education Act** bolsters village hall development.

1946 Formation of **National Association of Parish (now Local) Councils**.

1947 **Town and Country Planning Act** provides a basis for current planning law; local authorities become responsible for planning functions - forward planning and development control.
Agriculture Act stabilises the industry, and farm incomes specifically, by intervention in markets.

1949 **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act** creates the National Parks Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council and the basis for the future designation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Post-war programme of **public investment in infrastructure** and rural housing underway. Through the 1950s, significant improvement of many aspects of infrastructure, roads, public utilities, health services etc, generally led by public expenditure.

1968 **Countryside Act** creates the Countryside Commission.
Town and Country Planning Act introduces Structure Plan provisions.

1971 **Town and Country Planning Act** amends earlier legislation and establishes detail of the present planning system including Structure and Local Plans in their present form.

definitions of 'development', conservation areas and other special measures. Quite separately 'grass roots' **village appraisals** develop in the early 1970s.

1972 **Entry into EEC** British agricultural policy falls within the Community's Common Agricultural Policy.

1974 Reform of local government via **1972 Local Government Act** which establishes broadly the present pattern of local government in rural areas, strengthening the powers of parish councils and replacing generally small Rural District Councils with present, fewer, larger-scale District Councils. Formation of present Health and Water Authorities. **Revitalisation of the RCC movement** leading to greater community development profile via the appointment of fieldworkers. (The Standing Conference of RCCs was established in 1970). Development of **CoSIRA services** (replacing former Rural Industries Bureau). Continuing rise in the influence of **environmental pressure groups**.

1977 Creation of the **Council for National Parks**.

1978 Publication of the **Decline of Rural Services** report by the Standing Conference of RCCs. Widespread public interest. Rural areas and rural needs 'discovered'. Interest expressed by local and central government, local authority associations and major political parties prior to 1979 general election. The first rural 'patchwork' project, the Wyeside project in Herefordshire.

1980 **Local Government, Planning and Land Act** which introduces charges for planning applications and repeals the 1975 Community Land Act. Founding of **Rural Voice**, the alliance of major national rural organisations. The **Transport Act** represents a major change in transport legislation (notably the previous 1978 Act) increasing emphasis on free market competition. Rural social car schemes and community minibuses formalised.

1981 **Wildlife and Countryside Act** leads to notification of sites of special scientific interest to involved parties and compensation payments to landowners for not disturbing these.

1982 Review of functions of the **Development Commission** which leads to confirmation of the principle of establishing priority areas (Special Investment Areas) for its involvement in rural areas.

1984 Introduction of **Rural Development Areas** as priority areas of the Development Commission, replacing previous Special Investment Areas. However debate on rural disadvantage begins to swing from loss of services to low incomes.

1985 **Transport Act** including deregulation of bus services and further reform of rules governing community buses.

1987 Foundation of **ACRE**, national association of England's 38 Rural Community Councils, continuing much of the work previously undertaken by the Rural Department of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Following introduction of milk quotas earlier in the decade, controversy develops over future of farming and land use. Details of government **ALURE** (Alternative Land Use and the Rural Economy) proposals emerge and attract wide interest. Serious discussion about farm diversification.

1988 Merger of the Development Commission with its subsidiary CoSIRA into the **Rural Development Commission**.

1989 A second report, ten years on, about the **Decline of Rural Services** is published by ACRE and the Rural Development Commission.

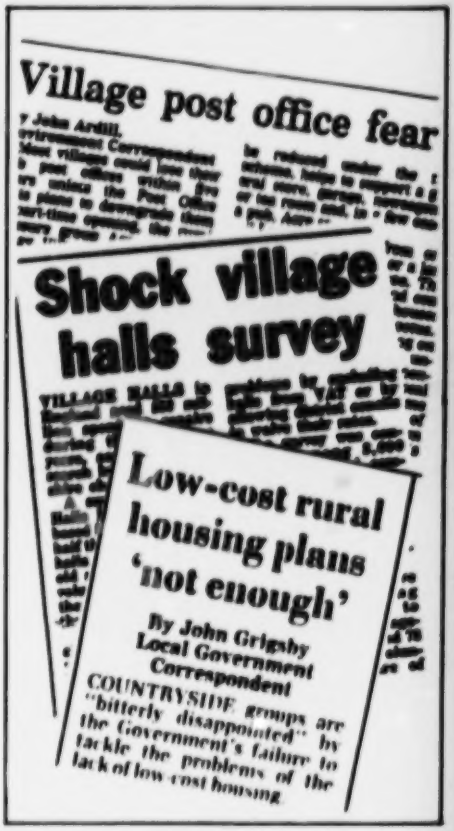
A good general reference source for this topic is the Open University's textbook *The Changing Countryside* together with the more technical accompanying *Countryside Handbook* (Croom Helm 1985). Also stimulating are various books by Howard Newby including *Green and Pleasant Land?* (Pelican 1980) and *Country Life* (Weidenfeld 1987). Present government-funded rural development initiatives are summarised in *The Annual Report of the Rural Development Commission* (1988). Andrew Gilg establishes a clear political context for post-war change in the countryside in his contribution 'Politics in the Countryside: the British Example', from *The Changing Countryside: proceedings of the first British/Dutch symposium on rural geography* (1983) edited by Gordon Clark et alia, Geo Books.

From the voluntary sector, sections of *Voluntary Social Action* by Margaret Brasnett (Bedford Square Press 1969), *The Story of Rural Community Councils* by H S E Snelson (NCSS 1963) and *Christmas Goals to Community Care: The Countryside - Past, Present and Future* by Sir John Cripps (NCVO 1983) all provide useful historical detail. Present thinking from this sector is summarised in *A Rural Strategy* published in 1987 by Rural Voice, and available from ACRE.

For a comparison of the objectives of intervention over a 40 year period, a screening of the film *24 Square Miles* taken with Alan Rogers' notes can be very productive. A video version of the film accompanied by the teaching notes is available from Trilith Video, Corner Cottage, Bourton, Nr Gillingham, Dorset. The original study by C S Orwin on which the film is based *Country Planning* (Oxford University Press 1944) is no longer in print, although there is a copy in ACRE's library. Finally there is plenty of scope for other comparisons, for example with urban development programmes and European examples of rural development.

b) Topical References

In marked contrast to earlier times, in recent years there has been a spate of topical rural issues hitting the headlines in the national media. Why is there this interest now? What does it say about rural society? What does it say about urban society? What implications does it have for change?



Village post office fear

Shock village halls survey

Low-cost rural housing plans 'not enough'

By John Grigsby
Local Government Correspondent

COUNTRYSIDE groups are "bitterly disappointed" by the Government's failure to tackle the problems of the lack of low-cost housing

40 *Good newspaper cuttings prompt discussion*

Some of the best material here will be ephemeral - newspaper and journal cuttings for example - which can have considerable impact and lubricate discussion. Various comprehensive cuttings services exist and your local RCC may have some useful material in its files. ACRE's magazine *Rural Viewpoint* is another useful source of topical references nationally.

c) Future Scenarios

The nature and pace of change in the countryside can be placed in context by establishing broad trends through recent years and looking to the likely outcome of these for rural communities in the future.

The following three charts have proved to be a useful, if simplified, summary of the implications of different approaches to development: the until recently accepted status quo (Scenario 1), the new market-based approach (Scenario 2), and a community-based approach (Scenario 3). What mix of these is most likely to occur in the immediate future and in the more distant future? General parallels could perhaps be drawn between these trends and development theory (eg dependency - Scenario 1, modernisation - Scenario 2, and community development - Scenario 3). A particularly vivid expression of a market-based approach is contained in Ferdinand Mount's article 'The New Song of the Land' in *The Spectator* of 10th January 1987.

APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

SCENARIO 1 More of the same or 'steady as she goes'

Planning	: Strong policy
	: Quality of the environment
	: Development into existing population centres
	: Changes monitored
	: Popular aspirations tested (consultation on social/economic issues)
Housing	: Rented sector continues to decline
	: Random share of council stock remaining
	: House prices increase
Employment	: Full-time employment increasingly specialised
	: Investment in advance factories/ workshops
	: Decline in seasonal/manual work
Services	: Gradual decline
Agriculture	: Variation of supports

SCENARIO 2 Market forces or 'The rural world turned upside down'

Planning	: Weak policy - Structure Plans abolished
	: Emphasis on market forces
	: Development where viable - new villages?
	: Limited environmental protection (eg National Parks, Green Belt)
	: Changes unmonitored
Housing	: Widespread speculative building in areas of demand
	: House prices?
	: Low rent sector disappears - lets into leases
	: Remaining public stock handed over (trusts and co-operatives)
Employment	: New jobs in growth centres
	: Mobile workforce
	: Fewer controls
Services	: Improvement according to demand
	: Privatisation
	: Reduced emphasis on targetting rural poor
Agriculture	: Price supports removed

SCENARIO 3 Community Development or 'Becoming strong by acting strong'

Planning	: Strong local policy, councillors less remote
	: Best of policy mix directed locally
Housing	: Private sector according to local demand
	: Public sector meeting special needs
	: Voluntary sector - housing associations
Employment	: Mixed opportunities
	: Present manufacturing/services
	: Work from home/new technology
	: Local sponsorship/marketing/promotion
	: New ideas eg local tourism initiatives
Services	: Competition and cooperation between communities
	: Examples of success eg within RDA
Agriculture	: Acceptance of additional alternative enterprises
	: Premium for least damaging methods

2. THE COURSES IN CONTEXT (LOCALLY)

Introduction to resources available locally and networks of helping services and agencies. Local policies affecting the area. Analysis of the effect of population change on local communities. Who is moving where and why? The interpretation of statistical material available locally.

Many of these subjects can usually best be introduced by the concerned parties themselves. There should be no difficulty in obtaining presentations on local helping agencies and the planning system from representatives of these (though see notes in Chapter 4 on the use of guest speakers). Analysis of population change should be sufficiently detailed to include parish data that may be out of line with district, county or regional trends, (see Ian Weekley (1988) 'Rural depopulation and counter urbanisation: a paradox' in *Area* Vol 20 No 2). Some academics may already have detailed research available on a parish basis that compares parish with parish in an attractive way (Figure 2 shows an example from Somerset); otherwise start with local authority planning staff and general census material available from planning departments and county libraries which often have historical data on population change too. Also consult the Rural Areas Database at the University of Essex, Colchester which has assembled a wide variety of social, economic and environmental information relating to rural areas and makes it available, for a fee. More informally, a family tree of a course member can illustrate vividly trends of population movement. Having discussed trends of population movement nationally and county or district-wide, it should be possible to place local parishes somewhere on the cycle of population change shown in Figure 3.

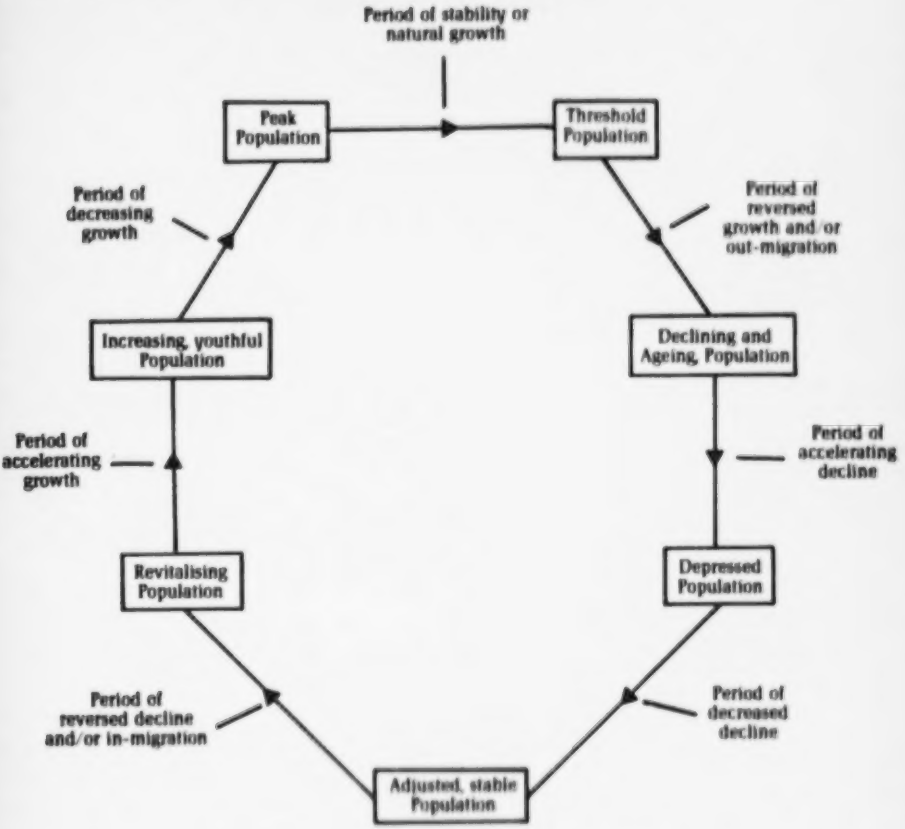
The network of helping services will be natural ground for the RCC, or (where it exists) for the local Council of Voluntary Service to cover. As this is likely to happen at an early stage of a course, it might be wise to ask for as much of the detail as possible to be provided in leaflet form for course members to consider in their own time rather than ploughing through procedural detail during a session. It is useful, however, to make personal contact with agencies' representatives at this stage. A guiding rule might be the desirability of presenting resources available to support community action in a way that encourages participation in the community where the course is being held.

Figure 2
Population Change in Somerset Parishes

This diagram shows very clearly how population movement has affected groups of Somerset parishes in different ways.

43 *(Source: Brian Woodruffe, Southampton University)*

Figure 3
Hypothetical Cycle of Population Change in Rural Areas



4.4 *(Source: Brian Woodruffe, Southampton University)*

3. PERCEPTIONS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

Following on from the context of the course, and its place within local and national rural development activity, is consideration of the identity of rural communities, both the way that rural life is presented nationally to the majority urban community and also the image communities have of themselves.

This topic is well worth exploring, and an area where the tutor and course members can have a field day! Discussions of the way that rural life is often presented as an idyll, and the distorting effects of this, can be found in many places, including *Green and Pleasant Land?* (Howard Newby, 1980, Pelican), *The People, The Land and The Church* (The Diocese of Hereford 1987) and in the Channel 4 series of a few years back *Country Crisis* whose summary booklet with its catchphrase 'The lid off the chocolate box', is more useful than the series itself.

A brilliant example of the exposure of the influence of powerful images on the life of a community is available in the exhibition *As an Fhearann* (From the land) featuring the Highlands of Scotland (available in printed form as a paperback (1986) at £6.50 from Mainstream Publishing, 7 Albany St, Edinburgh EH1 3UG). There are an increasing number of creative pieces of work emerging around the country as a whole which look at the question of 'identity', for example through the community play movement based on the work of the Colway Trust. Incidentally, Ann Jellicoe's *Community Plays and How To Put Them On* (Methuen paperback, 1987) has quite a lot to say of relevance to the promoters of a community development course.

Probably most effective at first will be for the tutor to ask course members, over a fortnight or so, to gather material and images that either illuminate the reality of rural life or distort it. These might be discovered in the national media, from advertising slogans, estate and travel agents' literature – indeed anywhere relevant. Examples brought by course members will be an extremely useful resource for future reference and discussion, and inevitably provide plenty of scope for humour! Eventually this line of enquiry might produce a publication or exhibition in which images of the community presented are shaped by the community itself rather than 'beamed in' from outside.

Some powerful visual material is available from Trilith Video, a charitably funded unit specialising in filming outstanding examples of rural community action, together with more reflective material. Write to: Trevor Bailey, Corner Cottage, Brickyard Lane, Nr Gillingham, Dorset for their catalogue.

4. THE MAIN CONTEMPORARY RURAL ISSUES

a) Rural Housing

Probably the issue of greatest concern in the majority of courses held to date. To include a history of rural provision and investment in housing, standards of housing condition as well as availability. The distinction between housing demand and housing need. Understanding the developer's point of view. Appropriate forms of local action – housing need surveys and the involvement of housing associations, local authorities and the private sector. A comparison of different forms of tenure.

Because of the severity of the current situation in much of the country, there is now some excellent material available to illustrate this issue, and very often expert advice is available to

support local action. Nationally the NACRT has been established to respond to the rural housing crisis, and all RCCs will be able to advise on local expertise.

The principal reference sources are:

The film *24 Square Miles* (available as a video from Trilith Video in Dorset) is particularly useful for establishing a context and contrasting public investment in the rural housing stock in the 1940's with the present position.

A Practical Guide to Providing Affordable Village Housing (1989) NACRT, 35 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QN.

Village Homes for Village People (1987) NACRT

Affordable Homes in the Countryside – A Role for Private Builders (1988), by David Clark, ACRE.

Who Can Afford to Live in the Countryside? – Access to Housing Land (1988), ACRE

Village Housing, a quarterly newsletter produced by NACRT

Homes We Can Afford (1988) ACC, Eaton House, 66A Eaton Square, London SW1W 9BH

The New Homes Review, which is sent to some parish councils by housing developers, can provide useful raw material for discussion. (Also available from The New Homes Marketing Board, 82 Cavendish Street, London W1M 8AD).

b) Rural Employment

A comparison of the contribution of various sectors to the rural economy. Changing employment patterns in the countryside. Part-time, seasonal and regional factors. Incentives and support for enterprise. Local services and rural tourism. Where are the growth points? What can rural communities do to promote the local economy themselves? Unemployment and counter-measures.

Of relevance to this topic are:

CountryWork (1989), ACRE and the Planning Exchange

The Industrialisation of the Countryside (1986) by Healey and Ilbury, Geo Books

Material in *Ledis*, the bulletin of the Planning Exchange, 186 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4HG

The Unemployment Handbook (1987) by Guy Dauncey, National Extension College, Cambridge

Jobs Where You Can Find Them, Trilith Video and locally gathered material (eg from Structure Plan Surveys). For material on rural tourism, contact the Rural Tourism Development Project, Department of Continuing Education, University of Bristol.

c) Agriculture and Land Use

An understanding of the present choices facing the agricultural industry and the background to recent developments. The implications of tackling

overproduction, the effects of this in terms of diversification, land use, land ownership, leisure activities and the overall pattern of rural employment.

An excellent up to date summary of the current arguments is contained in *A Future for Our Countryside* edited by John Blunden and Nigel Curry (Blackwell 1988). To some extent a sequel to *The Changing Countryside* (see 1(a) above), this evaluates clearly possible measures to counter overproduction, as well as predicting likely land use trends. For a free market, small farmer oriented critique of present policies, read any of Richard Body's (MP) recent three lively books (eg *Farming in the Clouds*, Temple Smith 1984). Bill Slee's book *Alternative Farm Enterprises* (Farming Press 1987) covers forms of farm diversification, including Table 2 which has proved to be a useful visual presentation of the options.

d) Rural Deprivation

The distribution of low income families, the low take-up of welfare benefits in rural areas, the availability of advice and support services.

The key reference here is still Brian McLaughlin's study for the Department of the Environment on Rural Deprivation, unpublished but available in a summarised form in *The People, The Land and The Church* (Diocese of Hereford 1987). Locally Rural Community Councils, Citizen Advice Bureaux and some other agencies, such as Shelter's Housing Aid Service, may be able to present a picture of supporting services, particularly local issues and opportunities for new initiatives. Some areas have useful local research available, eg Norfolk RCC's summary of John Packman's work for the University of East Anglia *Rural Disadvantage and Service Loss in Norfolk* (1987) or Ray Fabes et al (1983) *The Myth of the Rural Idyll: A Case Study of Rutland District and its Implications for County Policies*, Child Poverty Action Group Leicester Branch.

ACRE has produced a briefing kit entitled *Setting Up a Local Advice and Information Service* (ACRE, 1988, £1.50) which may be useful where lack of information contributes to deprivation.

Table 2

A Classification of Agricultural Alternative Enterprises

TOURIST & RECREATION	VALUE-ADDED
Tourism: Self-catering Serviced accommodation Activity holidays Recreation: Farm Visitor Centre Farm Museum Restaurant/tea room	By marketing: Pick-Your-Own Home delivered products Farm gate sales By processing: Meat products – pâtes etc Horticultural products to jam Farmhouse cider Farmhouse cheese
UNCONVENTIONAL PRODUCTS	**ANCILLARY RESOURCES**
Livestock: Sheep for milk Goats Snails Crops: Borage Evening Primrose Organic Crops	Buildings: for craft units for tourist accomodation for homes Woodlands: for timber for game for tax avoidance Wetlands: for fakes for game

(Source: R W Slee 'Alternative enterprises – their role in the adjustment of UK farming')

e) Rural Services

The pattern of declining rural services; flexible approaches to service delivery to improve viability: mobile services, multi-purpose use of village halls, peripatetic teachers etc.

On the changing patterns of services, see 'The distribution of fixed, mobile and delivery services in Rural Britain' by Malcolm Moseley and John Packman (1985) in the *Journal of Rural Studies* Vol 1 No 1; see also the forthcoming ACRE/Rural Development Commission report on the Decline of Rural Services. There are several books on small schools; one of the best is *The Small Rural Primary School: A Matter of Quality* (1987) by Adrian Bell and Alan Sigsworth, Falmer Press. For the community provision of services, see *Alternative Rural Services: A Community Initiatives Manual* (1982) by Stephen Woollett, Bedford Square Press – available from ACRE – and *If the Village Shop Closes.....A Handbook on Community Shops* (1981) by Sue Gwilliam, Oxfordshire RCC.

ACRE produces a range of Rural Briefings on rural service issues (eg telephone kiosks, post offices and village schools); these are detailed in ACRE's publications list.

f) Rural Transport

The problem of isolation and poor access to services. How to measure rural transport need, campaign for better public transport or provide community transport where this best meets the need.

To set transport in context as a means of access rather than an end in itself, Malcolm Moseley's *Accessibility: The Rural Challenge* (Methuen, 1979) is still useful, although the 1985 Transport Act has rendered parts of it out of date. Three excellent guides to community transport are readily available:

Rural Rides: A Handbook for Developing Rural Transport Options (NIACE, 1988) available free from REPLAN/NIACE, Top Floor, Quay Head House, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 1EB.

Promoting Transport for Rural Communities (Rural Development Commission/National Advisory Unit, 1989) available from the Commission, 11 Cowley Street, London SW1P 3NA or the NAU, Keymer Street, Beswick, Manchester M11 3FY.

Starting Up: Running a Community Minibus - A basic guide (National Advisory Unit, 1986)

From the Commission or the National Advisory Unit, you can also borrow a slide pack showing examples of transport initiatives serving rural communities.

On rural railways, ACRE's Rural Briefing *Keeping Rural Services on the Rails* provides a concise guide to community involvement. Two pro-railway organisations you may wish to contact are Transport 2000 (10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ) who produce a monthly newsletter *Transport Retort* and the Railway Development Society (48 The Park, Gt Bookham, Surrey KT83 3LS) who publish a range of useful booklets.

Trilith Video have produced *To Catch a Train*, a video about a railway station re-opening campaign.

g) Health and Community Care

A description of the diversity of sources of provision. A profile of volunteers and opportunities for volunteering. Community based initiatives (eg the carriage of samples for analysis). Community Health Councils and Family Practitioner Committees. Health education, preventative health care and women's health issues.

Within the staff of local Health Authorities, Social Services departments or major voluntary organisations there is usually someone who has the knack of providing a clear picture of present provision and the potential for local improvements.

Have a look at the following references:

Action for Health: Initiatives in Local Communities (1988), Community Projects Foundation, Health Education Authority, Health Education Group

'Health, Personal Mobility and the Use of Health Services in Rural Norfolk' by G Bentham and R Haynes in *Journal of Rural Studies* Vol 1, No 3, 1985.

Rural Health Services in Derbyshire (1985) by A Highton and F Richardson, Derbyshire Rural Community Council.

Whose Needs Count? Community Action for Health (1986) by Charmian Kenner, Bedford Square Press/NCVO

Setting Up a Health Day: A Guide to Running A Community Health Event (1985) by Lucy Kitto, Northamptonshire Rural Community Council

How to Oppose A GP Unit Closure (1987) by B Beech, Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS), Sandar Warshal, 40 Kingswood Avenue, London NW6 6LS

Community Care in Rural Areas (1986) by H Armstrong and C Thompson, Community Care Project, NCVO

Age Well Ideas Pack (1986) Health Education Authority

Self Help Group Starter Pack (1985) by J Wilson, Self Help Team, 114 Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3HJ.

b) The Environment

Environmental stress in the countryside, for example caused by pollution, farming methods or visitor pressure. Practical measures to protect or enhance specific local environments. Community action in these fields.

The definitive environmental action guide at present is Common Ground's *Holding Your Ground* by Angela King and Sue Clifford (Temple Smith, 1987, second edition). Combined with the guide to finding support for environmental projects published in 1989 by the Shell Better Britain Campaign *(Getting Help)*, it is a very useful resource for any course in this field. Just published is a new video and action file pack for groups involved in local environmental action. It is "designed to support practical action, through active learning" and costs £25.87 (including VAT) from TACTICS, PO Box 7, Manchester M19 2HD.

For more specific work, the half of *The Local Jigsaw* relating to Parish Maps often generates interest, and has the advantage of being supported by a video (contact ACRE for a leaflet about *The Local Jigsaw* pack and video). See also two other detailed slim publications from Common Ground *Parish Maps* and *The Parish Boundary* by Tom Greeves (1987).

The Countryside Commission is generally a good source of material relating to protection and enjoyment of the rural environment (John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham GL50 3RA). County naturalists' trusts and branches of national organisations concerned with the environment can often provide topical local material.

Finally, for a thorough summary of the law relating to rights of way and common land, and opportunities for local action, see *Rights of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice* by Paul Clayden and John Trevelyan, *Our Common Land, The Law and History of Commons and Village Greens* by Paul Clayden, and *The Commons and Village Green*

Action Pack all available from the Open Spaces Society, 25A Bell Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 2BA.

Parish Maps are explained in 'The Local Jigsaw' Information Pack.

5. IN THE VILLAGE

a) Village-based Organisations

For studying the role and legal powers of parish and town councils a great deal of advice and guidance is available from the local county parish and town council's association, usually found via the RCC.

For example, the standard textbook *Local Council Administration* by Charles Arnold-Baker (Longcross Press, 1989) can be obtained through the local association, although, apart from the very useful historical introduction, this is generally too technical for introductory use. More accessible, and also available from the local association, is a summary version in the shape of the National Assocation's (NALC) handbook *The Powers and Constitution of Local Councils*. Finally, as Appendix C, we reproduce a parish council's briefing sheet and a case study describing one councillor's involvement in a West Country parish which has proved useful in courses run so far.

Similarly assistance with village hall issues can be obtained from the local Rural Community Council and from ACRE's national advisory service which provides most of the relevant material. Some of this is listed on page 56 together with commentary on the history of the development of the village halls movement.

Increasing attention is currently being paid to the churches' role in rural development, both via local initiatives and nationally. Look out for relevant material emerging over the next year from the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas (ACORA - contact Ewan Harper, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ) and more locally from the work being undertaken by various diocesan working parties (eg *The People, the Land and The Church*, Diocese of Hereford 1987).

Help on questions relating to a membership/single issue local organisation can usually be found from their staff at a county or regional level. This would apply to organisations such as pre-school playgroups, Women's Institutes and over-sixties' groups.

Finally the course can throw light on the need to establish new organisations within the village to take on new challenges. This might include a local development trust or a community association. This question is further discussed in Chapter 4 on page 77.

b) Aspects of Local Research

Although a great deal of reference material will be available outside the village, it is very likely that some aspects of the course will demand fairly

intensive local research undertaken by course members themselves. Indeed this may be one of the strengths of a course, that it provides detailed information, otherwise unavailable, to strengthen arguments made on behalf of the community.

At one end of the scale, such an approach can become the focal point of a course. Some of the Irish examples mentioned earlier (page 10) have published substantial **resource surveys** using the expertise of several academics working alongside course members. More informally the course tutor may assist course members to follow through particular lines of enquiry themselves. Whatever the depth of enquiry decided upon, it will very often require a survey of local households to produce original research material. There is now plenty of experience of household surveys for tutors to draw upon. Advice on undertaking two specific forms, **housing and transport needs surveys,** is usually available locally. For housing surveys, contact the local branch of NACRT (Head Office: 35 Belgrave Square, London SW1), a local housing association with rural provision, or the Rural Community Council. For transport surveys, advice should again be available from the Rural Community Council, and many county councils now employs rural transport advisers.

A **village appraisal** is a more general survey whereby research is combined with a household questionnaire to produce a statement of community needs together with an agenda for action to meet them. There are many examples of these now, from parishes all over the country, and local advice is available from Rural Community Councils. However the definitive resource for tutors is the video/information pack *The Local Jigsaw*, available from Paton Brown Ltd, 19-23 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ (further information about the pack is available from ACRE). This provides detailed advice both on the village appraisal process and on **parish maps** (see reference above, page 49).

6. THE WORLD BEYOND THE VILLAGE

a) Handling the Media

The importance of the media – press, radio and television – in our complex modern society is something everyone now recognises. Few people do not read at least one weekly local paper; many listen avidly to local radio or regional telelvision news. It is the news editors of the world, from the editor of 'The Times' down to the chief reporter of the 'Little Twittering Gazette', who determine the agenda of social and political debate. These "gatekeepers" of our news media help keep us informed, decide which issues we will discuss, and which problems will remain forgotten.

What, the reader will ask, has this to do with adult education and rural community development? It is rather unlikely that the existence of, or the activities of, a village educational group will ever be reported on the BBC's 9 o'clock news. But, at local level, there is an enormous and growing network of daily and weekly newspapers, a growing number of free papers, local radio and regional television. All seek news for their readers. It is these media outlets which need to be understood and used to help a village community development group. There are four good reasons for doing this:

- The media can be used to help publicise the existence of a course from the outset. This is valuable in swelling the numbers taking part, but it also helps by bringing the course to the attention of those who are not covered by the 'usual' adult education publicity networks. A

media mention helps too in more subtle ways, particularly by adding to the perceived importance of a course. This is valuable not just in persuading more people to come along to the first session; it begins to establish the credibility of the whole exercise even in the minds of those who do not take part.

- Media attention to the work of the group, once founded, will further develop the credibility of the course's activities, and, by so doing, increase the confidence of course members. Lack of confidence in their own abilities often accounts for the failure of groups (and even whole communities) to tackle problems, leading to a cycle of apathy and dependency.
- The media can help the course achieve its goals. If the group decides that the community needs something – a better school, low cost housing etc – then the group must learn to lobby or campaign. Learning to use the media is part of the community development process.
- Even if the course leads to no immediate practical activity of any kind, an understanding of the media is vital to understanding how local society works and is directed by the authorities, politicians and pressure groups of all kinds. And, at some time in the future, the need for a local group to put over its case in the press may arise, thus bringing this knowledge into use.

There are books available on handling the media, but to give ready access to some basic rules, Appendix D lists 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' and gives examples of good and bad press releases and also of press conference planning. You may also wish to refer to Christopher Hall's invaluable book *How to Run a Pressure Group* (Dent, 1974 – out of print, but a new edition expected) or Denis MacShane's *Using the Media* (Pluto Press, 1979).

b) Negotiating and Lobbying

From examining the press and the media, it is a natural progression to consider the issues of negotiating and lobbying. Again, this may seem somewhat esoteric to a community development course at first, but if the group is to achieve tangible results, the whole process of obtaining resources and help must be understood. On a wider scale, a knowledge of the negotiating and lobbying process is a part of everyone's education in the ways democratic government works.

The first introduction to this subject will probably come when the course meets its first guest speaker. The speaker could be the District Planning Officer, the Rural Transport Broker or perhaps someone from the private housing sector or from a housing association explaining how rural housing provision is made.

Left to their own devices a course often views, for example, the visit of the planning officer, with some relish: at last a chance to attack officialdom, complain about the lack of street lights, raise that controversial planning decision taken six years ago. Send the fellow back with a flea in his ear – let the bureaucrats know what Little Twittering really thinks. These reactions are characteristic of the 'underdog' approach, and sadly very common. They rarely lead to helpful and positive developments.

In the next chapter, the use of guest speakers is considered in more detail. However, it is important to think through at the pre-course stage how the basic skills of negotiating can be addressed in the session before the guest comes.

c) Negotiating to Resource Projects

A second stage in learning how to negotiate comes when the group needs to find help, or funds, or

both to carry out a project. It is essential to find out who funds what, how and why ie. to understand the rationale and criteria for a body's grant-making decisions and to word a grant application accordingly.

Another important area to understand is that certain words and phrases mean a lot to some organisations. Careful reading of the literature will reveal the key words of each organisation – often jargon words in their specialist areas. Using jargon successfully puts a group ahead, on the right wavelength and shows that the group has done its homework.

Detailed advice on which funding sources to consider approaching for grants and how to apply are given in the next chapter (see page 77).

7. COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Fairly early on in a course it will be necessary to agree upon a definition of community development that is accepted and understood by course members. This in itself can be fairly tricky as the communal focus that community development suggests may appear to cut across personal political affiliations and perceptions and provide an unfamiliar perspective on issues.

A likely first response to the term 'rural community development' will be one of surprise to hear it applied to Western societies. Even the concept of rural development itself is probably more readily associated with the challenges facing developing countries and international efforts to help them meet these challenges. A useful starting point, therefore, for considering the current relevance of community development to rural communities in the developed world will be to examine the term's usage in its original and more familiar context. An early United Nations definition, very much of its time (1956), has provided a useful base for the subsequent refinement. It sees community development as an expression of the complementary effect of local and government action, working as follows:

● *'The term 'community development' has come into international usage to connote the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.*

This complex of processes is then made up of two essential elements: the participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiatives; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help, and mutual help, and make these more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements.'[1] ●

It may be useful to look critically at a definition such as this at an early stage of a course, and compare it with other views. For example the following paragraph written in 1981 by George Kent, Professor of Sociology at the University of Hawaii, perhaps more of a comment on community development values than a definition, is both helpful and striking.

● *'People become weak by acting weak. In much the same way, people can gain power by acting as if they had power. A village community may not have direct control over its nation's budget allocations, for example, but if it begins to formulate clear*

analyses and demands in the light of its interests, it will in the process manifest power and it will gain influence over these allocations. The power derived from the active challenging of authority is not received as a gift nor is it seized from that authority. Rather it reflects an inner strength which had laid dormant, an independent, self-created source of power".[3] ●

Reactions to these two quotations amongst course members have been very revealing.

The first, the classic UN definition neatly brings together the two main elements of community development theory – the pivotal role of local action and participation, and the complementary provision of back-up services and resources in ways which stimulate local initiative. This can be characterised in modern parlance as a 'bottom-up' approach in contrast to a centralised 'top-down' mode of decision making and resource allocation.

But the definition also has weaknesses. It assumes that the aspirations of the communities concerned are broadly in line with the intentions of central government; in other words that the State is 'benign'. This may not, of course, always be the case! One critique might point to examples in the developing world where national growth has been advanced at the expense of a country's rural communities predominantly through urban development. An extra twist is given to this conflict in those Western countries where rural communities are now very much in the minority. So a key issue is indicated – **the extent to which the interests of rural communities and those of the State are aligned.**

In a pluralistic society there should be some flexibility in this relationship, and there is evidence that community development approaches can be successfully resourced by the State alongside other policies less sympathetic to minority rural communities. Nonetheless course members may want to consider sceptical views of this process which question whether community development policy may not all too easily become good public relations and little more.[3]

A second weakness in the UN definition is the implication that the local community will have a coherence all of its own which can be translated meaningfully into action on its behalf. A serious fault in some early attempts to implement a community development policy was the reinforcement of divisions within a community caused, for example, by externally controlled fieldworkers acting exclusively through existing power structures in a village. David Korten of the Ford Foundation discusses this in a review of the early years of the international community development movement.[4] He cites a number of weaknesses in this respect including the confirmation of traditional village elites who, as a result, tended to capture the benefits of programmes, alienating the poor majority within a community. Programme designs, he suggests, often did not adequately recognise conflicts of interest, especially in stratified village social structures.

No doubt many would argue that community development practice has come on a long way since then, but a second key issue is suggested – **the extent to which a community as a whole is encouraged to become involved.**

Others would see the main source of community development activity and vitality arising not from externally generated programmes and government strategies and plans, but rather from independent local action,

imagination and commitment expressed at the very local level. The self-confidence George Kent refers to is a critical factor here, though long-term success will also depend upon community organisations consolidating their achievements. A part of this will involve the development of the kinds of self-educational approaches that Chris Curtin (of University College, Galway) has earlier identified as being vital to community development.

Course members have, however, questioned George Kent's view. Without doubting its relevance to the successful community organisations (one such said that it expressed what they were about 'in a nutshell') what does it say for those communities and individuals within communities who may find it impossible to 'act as if they have power'? Isn't this view excluding just those disadvantaged communities that development strategies are designed to reach? Isn't the view over-assertive, putting one community's advancement at the expense of another's?

By now it should be clear how these two quotations might provide a useful basis for a discussion of the aims and practice of community development. The polarity of the two main forces mentioned, locally generated activity and externally generated policy, allow that critical area between the two poles to be explored in some detail. Any number of issues might arise here, for example:

- How can one community's confidence and successful experience be translated to another?
- What is the most effective role for supporting fieldworkers and local politicians in furthering community development?
- What part do meetings and exchanges between community organisations have to play?
- Rural development is often evaluated through end results (the number of facilities constructed or roads repaired, the extent of the provision of services, and so on). Should not the processes involved in achieving end results (eg the extent of local participation) receive equal scrutiny?

Many aspects of community development theory can be introduced in this way; but what will be especially important will be the tying in of theory with course members' views and experiences. To this end it may be useful to match theoretical discussion with familiar practical examples. We have chosen the steady development of the provision of village halls in the UK to illustrate how this can work.

A Community Development Perspective on the Provision of Village Halls

Most villages have a hall; a recent survey by ACRE[3] has estimated the total number in England to be around 8,500. The record of village hall building throughout the greater part of this century has been a very impressive, largely unsung success story. What is probably self-evident is that each hall's construction has depended upon substantial local inputs of voluntary labour, commitment and resources. Less obvious perhaps are the now fairly sophisticated supporting services that have been built up throughout the country to advise hall committees and sustain halls. These include advisory and grant-aid schemes in most counties (available via Rural Community Councils), as well as the national Village Halls Forum and the national advisory service provided by ACRE.

Turning to the UN definition for guidance on how to interpret this example of community endeavour we see that the quoted definition fits the example very well. Village hall provision is a classic case of the efforts of local people "improving their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative", supported by appropriate back-up services. If this support is examined more closely it becomes clear that both its style and form of delivery follow community development principles.

One of the most significant forms of assistance offered by helping agencies is the supply of model documents which suggest an appropriate constitution for establishing a hall as an independent locally owned and managed charitable trust. These documents, and the linked charitable registration, resulted from the considerable foresight of members of the national village halls' advisory service in the earlier part of the century when they realised that the essential nature of a village hall was best expressed through such a legal structure. Those halls since established under the model documents are thereby protected in perpetuity; the original charitable objective remains secure, even if the hall is closed through neglect or lack of use. (This only happens rarely, and is far less likely to happen than with a service run directly by a local authority and thus subject to the vagaries of political expediency).

It is also relevant to note that a hall's constitution may well be the most familiar example of a legal structure of which course members are aware. When it comes to discussing other legal structures later in the course (perhaps when discussing the means of consolidating achievements via development trusts or community associations) this example, based upon a mixture of representative, elected and co-opted members, should prove a useful precedent. Finally the funding of village halls is also a model for a form of resource delivery that encourages local participation. Grant-aid schemes, where they exist, tend to look to the local community to raise a proportion of the funds required for a project which may then be matched by public funds. The ownership of the project rests with the local community.

1. *Concepts and Principles of Community Development* (1956) United Nations

2. 'Community-Based Development Planning' by G Kent in *Third World Planning Review* Vol 3, No 3, 1981

3. For example see: 'Rural Policy into the 1990's - Self Help or Self Deception' by B McLaughlin in *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol 3, No 4, 1988

4. 'Community Organisations and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach' by D Korten in *Public Administration Review* 40 (5), 1980

5. *Village Halls in England, 1988* (1988) by Louise Beaton, ACRE. See also: *Model Documents for Village Halls*, ACRE; *Christmas Coals to Community Care* (1985) by J Cripps, NCVO (available from ACRE, not NCVO).

A selection of the village hall publications available from ACRE.

CHAPTER FOUR

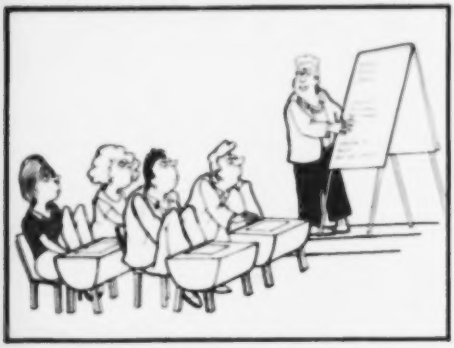
THE COURSE

In Chapter 1 we looked at the context for village based community development courses, in Chapter 2, the initial planning, and, in Chapter 3, the main elements of the curriculum. This chapter covers the nuts and bolts of running a course: making the best of your venue, 'breaking the ice', shaping the course, using guest speakers, organising field trips and so on.

FORMAT OF THE SESSIONS

VENUE

The venue which has been chosen will often offer limited scope for creating the right environment for the course. The atmosphere to aim for is relaxed, informal and comfortable. So, if there is a choice, perhaps between a committee room and the main hall in a village hall, or of rooms within a school, choose the most intimate, appropriate for the size of the group you hope to have. If you've estimated wrongly, then be prepared to change rooms at the last minute. Find the most comfortable chairs (not the infants!). Any amount of furniture shifting is worth it to create a friendly atmosphere. At the same time it is important to remember that the venue is somewhere that some course members may hold in great affection: beware of causing offence!



The infants' classroom is not an ideal course venue!

The atmosphere is informal, one of shared discussion where the tutor or course co-ordinator is a part of the group, not a 'lecturer' set apart. Put seats out in a circle, don't put tables in front of everyone, if you have a visual aid (flipchart, blackboard etc) try to incorporate it into the circle, not to set it at one end.

Use the tables to lay out information, books etc around the room for people to browse through, perhaps set up a small display board about the course, the RCC, other courses or some other relevant subject.

Book Boxes

Two Derbyshire courses were provided with boxes of books covering a wide range of subjects (services, housing, conservation, local histories, employment, general), some directly relevant to the issues in the courses, others of more general background material. Some books were purchased by Nottingham University on Derbyshire Rural Community Council's behalf - using a grant from the Rural Development Commission; others were obtained on a long-term loan from Derbyshire County Library Service and Nottingham University Library. (These arrangements may need setting up well in advance.)

The book boxes were left in the villages, in the care of a class 'librarian' for the duration of the courses and, owing to demand, for a further month to enable students to complete their reading. The boxes proved very popular and the wide selection of titles (40 different titles between the two boxes) ensured all students took at least one book.

REFRESHMENTS

Organise refreshments: a cup of coffee and biscuits perhaps. Usually these can be served halfway through the session to provide a natural break for informal discussion between course members, but this may vary with the format of the session. If you are leading a discussion, don't rely on yourself to make the coffee. Have everything ready beforehand, and arrange for course members to be involved, having a signal for the kettle to be boiled. This helps with timekeeping. There will always be volunteers for washing up; home made biscuits may start to appear as offerings for the group. The coffee break is an important part of the evening – but be prepared to bring it to a halt with determination!

Coffee Break

At Halstock, in West Dorset, the tutor didn't have to worry about the provision of coffee. Some members of the course asked ahead whether they could look after this and in return take donations for their village hall fund. This, as it turned out, fitted in well with the spirit of the course. Their concern to provide hot drinks took on a greater significance when the temporary nature of the meeting place was revealed – a portakabin in the grounds of the recently closed primary school. Until closure, the school itself had been the only public meeting place available in the community. Now that this was unavailable, the regular course sessions held through a cold winter in the ageing portakabin added an extra sense of urgency, and poignancy, to the community's efforts to build a new hall. This task became the main focus for course activity and progressed exceptionally quickly in the following year.

STYLE

The structure of each session will need to be tailored to the particular activity, but for the whole course it should be made clear that the sessions are informal and participatory. This is not a course of lectures, and the contribution of members both to planning the course and to each session is of great importance. Many sessions will have no visiting speaker, some will depend on the input of the course tutor and more importantly his or her ability to structure the session to allow course members to contribute fully and learn from each other. Within any group, there will be a wealth of experience to draw upon and a range of outlooks to stimulate discussion of issues.

Many of the course members will know each other, some well; most will know at least one other member of the group. It is important that these individual informal relationships are extended to embrace the whole group, and the course tutor, if possible.

Checklist: Practical Arrangements

- *Does the room look welcoming and is there enough space? Is the heating adequate?*
- *Are the chairs comfortable and arranged in a circle?*
- *Check electric sockets if planning to use a video, projector, or overhead projector. Is there an extension lead?*
- *Is there a flip chart or blackboard with chalk/felt pens? Do you have drawing pins/blue-tac?*
- *Are there pens and paper for the group to write with?*
- *Are there curtains or blinds to block out light if necessary?*
- *What about tea/coffee arrangements?*
- *Has a creche been provided (if needed for daytime courses)?*
- *At what time is the caretaker likely to appear?*

OPENING SESSIONS

OBJECTIVES FOR THE FIRST NIGHT

The objectives for the first night are to:

1. *Get over what the course is all about.*
2. *Attract people's commitment.*
3. *Establish an atmosphere.*
4. *Set an agenda.*

TEST *Will they come back next week?*

The first night of a course is vital in setting the tone and expectations of what is to come. It is also the test of the preparation which has gone into the course: will it all go smoothly? who will come? will they want to come again? The pressure on the tutor is very great and "first night" nerves must be very common. The key thing to remember on this opening night is that however thoroughly the tutor has prepared and however familiar he or she feels with the subject matter, from the point of view of prospective course members all is seen for the first time. Put yourself in the shoes of a hesitant participant entering the meeting place for the first time. Is there someone at the door to welcome and register them? Do they seem worried by the commitment implied by registration at the first meeting? Is there a comfortable space for them to go on to after registration, perhaps to the display of books and materials already mentioned?

There is so much to do in a practical way on this first night that it is essential to have two people working together to cover all that needs to be done, especially on the administrative side. You will be working for the first time in an unfamiliar place, trying to find where things are (sockets, chairs, kettles, light switches, cups etc) so everything takes longer. You may not know anyone's name, and they may themselves be rather nervous and apprehensive. You will have to start collecting people's names and addresses – money may not need to be collected until the second week.

Being organised is very important. Arrive in plenty of time (45 minutes early is not too soon), find the things you need, get everything in from your car. Make sure things work – *especially* any audio-visual equipment. Lay out the room as you want it before anyone else does it for you!

Then by the time people arrive, you will be available to welcome them, chat a little, find out who at least some people are before facing the group as a whole.

Having some brief written information to hand out may reassure people that they are going to get something positive from the course – often tutors have prepared folders for course members to gather information throughout the course. These look 'official' and can dispel fears that the whole thing may sound very woolly. If you are doing a woodwork course you at least take home a battered lump of wood after the first class to show what you have done! A folder gives the course credibility at home, and provides extra publicity.

Get the timing right on the first night. Start as promptly as possible, explain what will happen during the evening and try to stick to it.

The numbers game is crucial at this stage. You will almost certainly be working with a minimum number of course members which you must achieve for the course to run. If you are lucky, this will not cause a problem, but if you appear to be too few then this will have to be discussed with the group as a whole at the end of the first session. (Don't let this problem detract from the enjoyment of the session for those people who *have* come along.) Is there a reason why people have been unable to come on that particular night? What could be done to recruit

more people? If the people who have turned up are sufficiently committed to the idea of the course, they will want to do something to ensure that it will still take place. Even if you only have six people, if they really want to continue, they only have to find one extra participant each. Some practical ideas for bringing in more people are suggested on page 82. If you are not bound by a minimum number, you may feel, as the course organisers at Trefonen in Shropshire felt, that the commitment of a small number of individuals and their potential for achieving worthwhile results make the continuation of the course still worth pursuing. An example of a very successful group that was resuscitated after a disappointing start can be found on page 82.

INTRODUCTIONS

A clear introduction from the course tutor is important: say who you are, where you are from, and a little about your experience. Also introduce the fieldworker involved in the course, and allow him or her to say a few words. An explanation about the course, the agencies involved and its broad objectives needs to be offered very early on. The tutor needs to plan precisely what he or she wants to say about this, so that it sounds as clear as possible.

Apart from the tutor introducing him or herself to course members, an early opportunity for every participant to introduce themselves will be important. In some cases members will all be known to one another; however if recruitment is from several parishes, or includes, as is likely, a few newcomers, then a single round of the group asking names for the benefit of the tutor may be insufficient: something more structured will be required. This is a matter of judgement of course, as a laboured start with too formal an introduction may be wrong for many rural settings.

Icebreakers

Choose one you feel happy with:

1. *Divide the group into pairs and ask members to tell their partner who they are, why they have come on the course and what their expectations of the course are. The listeners then report back to the whole group their partner's story (subject of course to correction!)*
2. *In Dymock a good 2½ inch map of the area was displayed and course members each placed a map pin where they lived – also helpful for the tutor!*
3. *Ask course members to sign themselves in on a flipchart (shades of 'What's My Line?') and recall one amusing anecdote associated with their name.*
4. *A lighthearted way to introduce a group is for everyone, before sitting down, to be instructed to introduce themselves to at least three people they haven't met before, and to shake hands with them. Again, the handshake helps to 'fix' which names belong to whom.*

The first two sessions really need to be looked at and planned together. The task for the tutor is to raise awareness of local rural issues, gather together a shopping list of those of greatest concern and interest, and to turn these ideas into a well planned course programme.

SETTING THE COURSE AGENDA

One important task to be achieved during the first or second session will be to establish an opportunity for each course member to contribute something to the agenda for the course. This may not be easy, although individuals may enrol on a

course with many different expectations, most will probably expect the programme to be determined by the tutor. For the RAE type of course it is very important that its contents be shaped at an early stage by its members, within a structure given by the format and the tutor's involvement.

It is in the area of the analysis of local issues and resulting action that this is most critical. Without the identification of local issues by course members the format has little meaning. A direct discussion of local issues at the start of the course may feel uncomfortable and may not be especially productive. Unhelpful patterns may be established with, for example, one or two members holding forth unduly and inhibiting others. Alternatively, a brainstorming session, often a useful technique on occasions such as this (see page 67), may provide too much detail.

A technique that has provided a useful start to courses is summarised below:

Best and Worst Futures

According to this technique around half the first session (ie an hour) is given over to the imaginary construction of a picture of the host community ten years hence. The purpose of this exercise is to record feelings about the future, of course, but more importantly to reveal what is felt about the present in an unforced, relatively uninhibited way.

Some issues may be particularly difficult to open up if one stays purely with present-day experiences. For example, a very controversial issue in many communities is the inability of the local housing stock to meet both the demand and need for housing in the area. Often those who are born and work locally find themselves unable to compete for a house with others from outside the area. If a course has recruited reasonably widely in the community and includes people who find themselves on both sides of this complex issue, it may be particularly difficult to achieve an adequate discussion of the current situation. However, if the imagined picture of ten years' time may be more freely aired, then it may not be so difficult to take on board the present situation at a later stage of the course. Also, by pitching the discussion ten years ahead, a realistic sequence of action related to the issue can be worked upon during the course. This approach, of saying what you feel about the present by talking about the future, is related to the observation that people often joke about things that most concern them.

WHAT TO DO

Divide course members into groups of three or four, as far as possible mixing the composition of the groups. Ask each group to spend around 25 minutes discussing and recording the worst and best that might happen to the community over the next ten years. If there is time, some indication of action that might affect these outcomes can also be explored. After the first 20 minutes, or whenever discussion appears to be tailing off, reveal a list of issues, some of which may have escaped some groups' attention, eg housing, employment, low incomes, environment, population structure, planning, health care, community activities, services.

The following structure may help:

Future Scenarios

1. What is the worst that might have happened to the community by the year... (ten years ahead)?

2. What is the best scenario for the year... (same year) and what policies will most help assure this?
3. What local action can best alleviate aspects of 1. which can be anticipated now?

Try to avoid cataclysmic responses of world significance to question 1, and try to concentrate discussion on local issues. At the end of the group discussion period (say 40 minutes) responses should be reported back to the tutor in rotation, with all course members present, and recorded on a flipchart. These responses can then be returned to participants the following week in typed form for subsequent discussion and action during the rest of the course. One such record, produced at a course in **Maiden Newton** in West Dorset, is shown below. Such a list can be very helpful in establishing issues of local importance, and in ensuring maximum participation thereafter.

MAIDEN NEWTON 2000?

Worst Possibilities

Retirement area
Satellite to Dorchester
Recreational/Tourism area
Holiday lets and weekend cottages
Disturbance of present balance in key issues, such as housing and employment
The appearance of jacuzzis!
Loss of services, eg trains, school, shops
Significant extension of present development boundaries
Continuation of the worst aspects of speculative building, especially re densities
No development at all
Lack of family-sized, ie three bedroomed plus, houses
Weakening of local planning consultation
Small industries disappear
More juggernauts through the village

Best Targets

Retain balance in key issues
Employment opportunities locally, both jobs and training
More employment via agriculture
More consultation on planning issues
More access to information on local matters
Flexibility of land use
Availability of gas supply
Return of bank (with Cashpoint)
Underground wires (one dissenting voice!)
Improvements to pavements
A by-pass
Better village hall
Village society
Thriving community spirit
More adult education!

An alternative prompt to getting people to think about local issues, both present and in the future is to reflect first on the past. Audio-visual material can be very useful here. Used in a first session, this is a comfortable way of providing an input, which people may expect, while opening up debate about the area. Those course members who have lived in the area long enough will be able to share their memories with those more recent newcomers: this can be helpful in providing them with a degree of status.

24 Square Miles

Using the past to look to the future.

This is archive film material, saved onto video, based on C S Orwin's classic book, Country Planning, and was made by government information services in 1946,

providing an excellent review of rural life at the time in 24 square miles of Oxfordshire.

It is appropriate for use today in any rural area as a way of provoking debate about the massive changes which have since taken place in the countryside and challenging the direction in which things are moving.

Alan Rogers has prepared some brief but very valuable discussion notes, which are supplied with the video by Trilith Video (see page 40).

The film lasts 40 minutes.

This session can be linked in to a 'Best and Worst Futures' approach or people could pool thoughts about change in a group discussion after the film.

It could also be used at a pre-course meeting or at a later stage in the course.

SHAPING THE COURSE

Having gathered together this shopping list of local issues, the demanding task for the tutor is to translate this into a well planned, carefully prepared course programme. In doing this, thought has to be given to three issues:

1. setting priorities
2. course structure
3. formats and presentations

SETTING PRIORITIES

To a large extent, the group will have indicated their own priorities in discussing their shopping list. A degree of choice will still rest with the tutor, however, in allocating different amounts of time to different topics, and to making decisions about what to slot in when things like the availability of speakers has to be considered. In a course of a fixed length it simply is not possible to fit in everything and the tutor has to exercise his or her judgement about what will fit together best to make a good course. It is important not to let personal preferences or ease of running sessions interfere with this judgement: it is always possible to find a way of running a session on an issue with sufficient time to plan and prepare for it (see formats and presentations).

COURSE STRUCTURE

The basic structure of the course into which the individual sessions have to be planned to fit is a three phase programme. Early sessions concentrate on **information** giving and gathering. Then there is usually a short break, and after this the sessions change and are planned to be much more geared towards **practical action**. This shape reflects the whole philosophy of these courses: *doing by learning.*

In constructing the course and planning individual sessions, the tutor must have a very clear picture of this structure in his or her mind, and be able to envisage how the course might unfold and develop.

FORMATS AND PRESENTATIONS

In a course of this length where there is an expectation of great involvement from the group itself, it is very important to plan the format and presentation of the sessions in order to allow for:

1. a group feeling to develop;
2. individual involvement to grow;
3. changes of style which provide a continual stimulus.

These are all aspects of group maintenance. At the same time, the course has to be planned progressively to achieve group tasks.

There are different ways in which this can

be done. Using guest speakers is one, because a change of the main presenter for the evening introduces great variety, but these are also the sessions over which the tutor has least control. The sessions which are planned in-house need therefore to be thought about carefully to obtain the maximum benefit from them.

The three things which can be varied are:

1. the presentation of the main material for the evening;
2. the interchange between the tutor and the group;
3. the way the group itself is structured and what it is asked to do.

Experience in education has shown that students need active involvement to learn effectively, rather than passive listening. Simply presenting information through a talk or lecture, followed by discussion, is not always the most effective way to treat a subject. More participative and active approaches, which could include role-play, case studies, games, are more likely to promote individual and group development and learning.

This may not be what the group expects, and the tutor must try to achieve a balance between responding to what the group say they want, and encouraging them to try something new.

It also takes confidence on the part of the tutor to vary teaching methods and put aside lecture notes. Some practical ideas for doing this follow later.

As well as individual needs, adult learners are likely to have experiences and opinions in common with some other members of the group, and the course will benefit greatly if these can be drawn out.

Table 3
Methods of Presenting Material

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Video	Visual images, information, ease of operation, best used with trigger questions.	Passive, can be too much information to take in. Need equipment.
Slides	Can stop and look at each one.	Too many can be too much to take in. Need equipment.
Film	Big visual images.	Expensive to hire, equipment complicated, need a screen.
Articles	If short and well written are good discussion starters.	Not too good if too long or too dense. Reading ability of group members may vary.
Photographs	Can be handled, images can be powerful.	Only one person can see at a time.

Presentation of material

The main input for a session can be presented in a variety of ways, and varying this presentation from week to week adds to the stimulus of the course *(see Table 3)*. It is also important to consider the most *effective* way that material relating to a particular topic could be dealt with.

The first question to ask yourself is whether you feel capable of dealing with a particular topic yourself. If you do not, then one option could be to bring in an outside speaker, an 'expert'. This is discussed in detail in 'Using Guest Speakers' as it is a formula often used, and one which needs careful planning. There are however other options:

If the problem is lack of knowledge, you could read up on the topic and attempt the session yourself, making it clear to the group that it is the first time you have tackled this topic and you may be a little unsure.

Alternatively, you could suggest that the group share the task between them: perhaps one or two members offering to find out about an aspect of the topic. The Book Box might be helpful here. The tutor's role would be to provide a structure for the session and pull it together. This is not simply a way round a problem. It is also a valuable teaching method which involves the group and reduces dependence on the tutor.

There are many different forms in which material can be used in a course. It may take some time to research what is available on a particular topic. Some leads can be found in the section on curriculum planning and ACRE's librarian may be able to provide further references. Other material may be available locally, and some may often be provided by course members themselves, particularly if they are encouraged to look out for it.

WRITTEN MATERIAL

A folder of written material gathered together by each member of the course as the weeks go by can be a valuable resource. The photocopier is a good tool – use it!

The empty folder can be given to everybody on the first night, together with one or two starter sheets of useful information. Notes relating to individual sessions can be handed out at the end of each evening, either a synopsis of the main material, or perhaps lists of contacts, photocopies of relevant articles etc linked to the theme of the session. It can be helpful to return the following week with notes based on the previous session – the tutor could prepare these, or perhaps ask a different course member each week to be responsible for the task. If they then give them to the tutor during the week to be typed and/or photocopied, this can be a useful chance for individual contact.

Any material brought along by guest speakers (they should be encouraged to do this) can also be added.

The tutor should think through what other useful local references could be prepared in conjunction with the sessions, so that at the end of the course each participant is left with a folder of material which will remind them of the course content, refresh their memory and be a useful, working reference for future activities.

Interchange between the tutor and the group

There are ways in which the interchange taking place between the tutor and the group can be varied greatly. Some ways of structuring sessions

place the group in a very passive role, whilst others can encourage them to be very participatory and active. Sessions encouraging this participation can draw heavily on course members' own ideas and experience, and can be very involving and enjoyable.

There are a number of devices for allowing this to happen, which need a little forethought and preparation.

1. BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming means putting a question or issue to the group to stimulate their immediate thoughts and ideas. Set a time limit, and either ask the group to jot down their thoughts first and then call them out in turn, or get them to call them out as their thoughts occur. Make a list of all the ideas mentioned on a flip chart or board for everyone to see.

The list can then be used in several ways:

- as a basis for more detailed discussion of the issues;
- for sorting the ideas into different categories or order of importance;
- to establish priorities for further action;
- for reference throughout the session.

2. QUESTIONNAIRES

A wide range of questionnaires could be used, as a basis for group discussion, or to enable individuals to reflect on their own situation, needs and options. Multiple choice, true or false, or open ended questionnaires are some examples of possible formats.

The Mere Quiz

At Mere, in Wiltshire, an enlightened member of the local social services team had the bright idea of introducing a session discussing the need for day care provision in the town with a quiz on health and social services. The series of quiz questions on the nuts and bolts of access to health care and benefit rights (eg where would you go for free false teeth? or who qualifies for a disabled sticker for their car and how is this obtained?) proved to be a riveting introduction.

3. ROLE-PLAY

Be careful, role-play can be offputting. However, the tutor can ask the group to slip into characteristic roles of people or agencies it is dealing with to great effect. This is particularly valuable during a session on parish councils.

Elements of Good Discussion

- *everyone has a chance to speak;*
- *everyone listens;*
- *everyone's opinion is valued and respected, even if people differ in their views;*
- *people keep to the point.*

Group Structures and Activities – Working in Pairs or Small Groups

It is often valuable to break the group into pairs or small groups, not only for discussion of issues, but also to work on a specific task, fill in a questionnaire, play a game, do a role-play, or work through a case study. This can increase involvement and participation, and reduce dependence on the tutor. It also enables those who are nervous of joining in the larger group to have their ideas and opinions listened to; at the other extreme it can deal with the problem of the persistent talker who dominates the group.

It is usually helpful for the tutor to allocate people to groups or pairs, either specifically to allow or prevent particular combinations of people, or to allow a random mixing of the group.

MIXING

A good way of mixing the group into

smaller groups is to count round the circle. If you had a group of 20 to divide into groups of 4, say, count round 1,2,3,4,5,1,2,3,... etc. Then all the 1s go together, all the 2s in another group, and so on. This separates people sitting next to each other, and ensures a good mix.

Sometimes the exercise is valuable in itself, and no report back is needed, but often the small groups will want to share what they have been doing with the whole group and use this as a basis for discussion.

Simple group tasks and activities can be devised which will lead to discussion and debate about how an issue can be addressed at a very practical level, and beyond that can actually progress a project. Every member of the small group should have something to contribute to this.

Very often the tutor will find it helpful to move around informally between these small groups, joining in the discussion, adding thoughts, probing, and also listening out for important points being made which can be woven into a group discussion later.

USING GUEST SPEAKERS

If you decide to invite an outside speaker, you must be clear about why you want them - because of their specialist knowledge or skills, or their particular experiences or perspective. Decide exactly what you want them to provide eg a talk, leading a group discussion, answering questions, teaching a skill, or a combination of these.

The position of a guest speaker is always a difficult one. They are coming in cold to a group which is developing a momentum of its own. The crucial role of the tutor is to maximise the opportunity for the group to harness the expertise of the visiting speaker.

WHY USE GUEST SPEAKERS?

Bringing in speakers from outside achieves four ends: it enlists expertise in a particular field; it varies the pace and presentation of the sessions; it builds up links in an informal way with figures who may be of great help to the community at a later date; and it lends weight to the course and increases its credibility.

CHOOSING SPEAKERS

Speakers should be chosen carefully, both for their knowledge and role, but also for their ability to handle an informal group of this kind. There are some people who find this difficult, especially some local authority officers who see their relationship with the communities in their area as wholly official. Others welcome the opportunity to discuss their role informally, and to exchange ideas with a local group in an open way, instead of the usual situation of dealing with a current and burning issue.

Speakers do not have to be 'professionals': they can often be practitioners who can give insight into a real experience, either a community activity or perhaps a small business, such as a village shop/post office.

It is better not to have a whole succession of guest speakers, one a week. It becomes difficult for the group to gel if it has no time on its own, and is easy for the course to turn into a string of lectures. If a guest speaker comes no more often than every other week, this gives a chance for the group to meet between visitors, but still allows for plenty of outside input and a variety of presentation. A guest speaker's contribution need not take the whole of a session.

Apart from the input which they make, the introduction of different styles and personalities can be a valuable contribution in itself. The dynamic of the different sessions can be very important to the development of the course, although it is very difficult to predict. A lighter weight session involving a lot of humour can be as important to the course in the long run as a heavyweight serious one!

Contacting Guest Speakers

Some courses have built in flexibility in planning the sessions by having approached a number of speakers beforehand who have agreed they would be prepared to take part if asked, but leaving it to the beginning of the course to allow the group to select the issues on which they would welcome specialist input. The Derbyshire report[1] underlines this:

- *"..... guest speakers were not booked until the interests of the students were known - hence giving the students more control over the shaping of the course. There was therefore a lot of careful consideration given to compiling a list of people who it was thought may be able to contribute to one or more sessions, depending down which way the courses ventured. Eventually some 20 or more potential contributors from a wide range of backgrounds were identified and notified of*

Guest speakers (prospective parliamentary candidates) at the Colne Valley course.

possible future approaches, though only seven of these were actually called upon. However, it was extremely useful to have made such contacts and to know people were willing to respond at short notice." ●

Approaching a wider number of possible speakers than you are likely to need for a single course may be easier if you are discussing with them a multiple programme in a single year, or courses to be held over a number of years.

USING COURSE MEMBERS AS SPEAKERS

The Shropshire organisers saw the necessity of giving members confidence to contribute their own experience. Their report on the courses[7] puts the aim very clearly:

● *"We wanted to be flexible enough in our planning to be able to respond to interests and demands from within the group. From the outset we recognised that those who lived in the area were the experts on their own community and that our role was to provide information and a context for that debate."* ●

Course members are your most valuable resource. Some may have expertise in very appropriate fields; others may have a burning interest in an issue in which they are prepared to invest time, gathering information, undertaking local research etc. This can then be shared with the group as a whole – their enthusiasm may be more infectious than that of an outside 'expert'.

Tapping Local Knowledge

At **Castle Cary** *in Somerset a talk by a member of the County Council's economic development team on the potential for sympathetic tourism development in the area, inspired one course member, who happened also to be a District Councillor, to draw upon her previous experience as a public relations consultant. She went away and wrote a paper which led to a substantial promotional campaign on behalf of the town, undertaken by course members and others. This included a press conference and leaflet launch when Cary 'invited the world to pay it a visit'.*

On another course, **(Halstock)** *a local amateur historian who had just published her research (but not herself a member of the course) was invited to present her findings to an open session of the course, doubling the number present to over thirty and effectively breaking down any barriers remaining between the course itself and the wider community in which it was held.*

The course at **Dymock** *included two 'professionals' whose expertise was very relevant to the course. One was the Timber Use Consultant of CoSIRA, and the other the Assistant Director (Policy) of the Countryside Commission, both of whom lived in the village. It is not always easy for people to contribute their knowledge: often it can look as if they are trying to dominate the course. On the other hand, it can be valuable for others to be aware of the wealth of knowledge available to their community which could be tapped at a later date. Dymock built into the programme an opportunity for these two members to make a presentation within an appropriate session about the role of their organisations, particularly drawing out the relevance to issues with which the course*

had been concerned. They were both very sympathetic to the style of the course, and handled this opportunity thoughtfully.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Both the speaker and the group must be prepared for the evening. Time invested with the speaker, explaining the aims of the course, the sessions to date and the format of the evening, will be repaid on the night. It is very important to go carefully through why the particular session is valuable to the course, what has gone before, and to work out in detail the aspects of the subject that you wish the speaker to cover. Make a point of asking for a simple handout that can be distributed at the end of the session.

Similarly, it is important to prepare the group for the speaker. Make sure they know the previous week who is coming, what they will be talking about and what their job entails (eg it is important to know that planners are not responsible for street lighting and therefore should not be challenged about local lighting inadequacies!). If possible allow a short time in the previous session to plan for the following week. Get people to think about the forthcoming session, gather material, decide between themselves what they feel is important to gain from the session. They may want to pre-plan some questions, and certainly to identify the ground they want to see covered. If the group wants to gain something from the speaker, they should have something positive to offer in return. For example, if they feel their community needs a late night bus to the nearby market town, they could offer to survey households in the area about demand and to monitor the new service. If they want a tree planting programme, the offer of local fundraising would help.

Finally, as the course tutor, it is important that you are prepared thoroughly for the evening, and that you are as well versed as possible in the subject and prepared to challenge, question and lead the speaker on.

ON THE NIGHT

The task on the night is to make the speaker feel comfortable with the group. Informal chat with some of the group members beforehand can help here, particularly if they can tell the speaker about the course to date and the value they find in it and hopes they have for it.

Introduce the speaker clearly, welcoming your visitor and stating any organisation for which they work. Make it quite clear whether they are representing that organisation and its views, or whether they are there as a personal commitment, and feel able to speak off the record and share their professional knowledge. The latter is often the case. Many people find it refreshing to come to a local community without the pressure of a particular issue under discussion, and can relax and enjoy a wide ranging discussion of their role. The best will join in an analysis of the community's position.

If there is other course business to discuss first, it may help the visitor to get a feel of the group and its approach, provided that it does not take up too much time.

It is exceptionally important that the tutor retains control of the meeting. It is very easy, with a confident speaker, to sit back and let them hold the floor, and then find it very difficult to regain authority over the direction of the content, and draw things to a close. Always make sure that you are sitting somewhere where you still feel in control.

Your job of steering the content, directing

questions and probing further into issues of importance locally, can require very positive intervention and sometimes interruption, and a complete change of direction. This can seem very rude and is not always easy, but it is the tutor's job. The evening may be a wasted opportunity if you are too polite to tell someone they are dwelling too long on something which is of little importance.

If interest is being expressed in helpful information or advice, or if there seems to be a possibility of follow up, then clarify with the visitor and the group what might happen next or what opportunities for further contact there might be.

If a visiting speaker comes from an authority which does not cover the whole of the catchment area for the course, then make sure that you are able to supply information about contacts with corresponding authorities and major policy differences.

AFTER THE SESSION

A follow up call to the speaker to thank them and ask informally if they had enjoyed the session and found it interesting may provoke informal comments which prove helpful as pointers to future action. If the speaker made any offer of future help, this should be followed-up in writing and, if there is no reply, by a friendly enquiring 'phone call.

Make sure that a fee and expenses for the evening are offered: more often than not they will be refused.

Allow time the following week for a short discussion of the previous session, how it had gone and what people felt had come out of it of future importance. Often after a week's reflection, a view of the session will have crystallised.

Finally, a useful reminder of contributors to the course can be to produce a full list of their names and addresses, together with details of the complete programme at the end of the course.

1 *Local Life: a report on the community development courses held in the Derbyshire RDA in 1987* (1988) by Paul Andrews, Derbyshire RCC

2 *Community Development in North West Shropshire: an experiment in adult education*, Community Council of Shropshire.

PLANNING THE SECOND HALF

The last session before the break is very important. The second half of the course remains to be planned and the task for the group is to select possible directions for the course to follow and to set priorities. It may be possible to see clearly themes and projects which are emerging from the group, but it could be useful to return to the initial list of issues which the group prepared right at the beginning of the course.

At this stage, it is important to get the group to start thinking towards practical projects which might arise from the course and to encourage the feeling that the course is aimed at action through learning.

There may be areas which the group feel have not been covered in the first sessions which they would still like to see included; primarily the last sessions should be more practically oriented. This is the point at which priorities have to be set.

The following device for achieving this gives everyone in the group a chance to put in their own ideas:

Session Planning

Divide the group into small groups of three

or four. Give each group a large sheet of paper divided into the number of remaining sessions, plus a space for a field trip if one is still to be planned, and a felt tip pen.

Have some initial discussion amongst the whole group about what needs to be achieved in the last sessions: What kind of input might be most helpful to enable new initiatives: information, examples, local research? What are the main issues which the group feel are emerging to which local action might make a positive contribution?

Allow plenty of time, say 30-40 minutes, for the small groups to discuss their own individual ideas and plan out the remaining sessions which they would like to see. In a small group everyone has a chance to make their own contribution, whereas some ideas might get lost in a larger group. Each group should then give brief details on their large sheet.

At the end of the time, collect up the sheets and stick them up where everyone can see them all. The whole group can then examine the different ideas.

The job of the tutor is to help the group to decide their priorities. Some common themes may well emerge which can be agreed upon. Others may command little general interest. If a minority idea is very important to those suggesting it, then perhaps it can be incorporated in a different way by a small group meeting between course sessions, or in a different room, for some of the remainder of the course.

It is important not to select a disjointed series of ideas from different groups in order to keep everyone happy. There must be a logical sequence to the remainder of the course to enable growth to take place.

Having agreed a general set of priorities, the tutor can then take all the ideas away and get to work quickly to plan the remaining sessions carefully, book any speakers necessary and put together a programme which can be sent out during the break.

It may also be important to consider whether there is any work which course members can take on during the break to develop ideas further.

Vic's Video

At Blakeney in West Gloucestershire, one course member with video expertise used the longer period between sessions of the Christmas break to make a video film about the village. He specifically included footage of another community's well-equipped adventure playground to illustrate the possibilities to local parents interested in a facility of their own. A screening of the video film in the later stages of the course went down very well.

There is a particular challenge to be met where course members are drawn from several different communities, each of which will have different needs and opportunities. The needs of one place should not be allowed to swamp those of another, and every effort should be made to listen to the ideas of smaller groups and seek ways in which they can be met.

THE BREAK

Not every course can be planned with a break in it, but is is a valuable feature to build in.

Christmas or Easter provides a natural and

appropriate time to break for several weeks, or you may have to make do with a break of only one week or so over half term. The summer would probably prove too long a break to maintain the cohesiveness of a course, unless a very specific project was planned as an activity during these months.

The most valuable time for a break during a course is probably about two thirds of the way through, say after 8 sessions of a 12 session programme. At this point there is a natural change in the course: the first part will have been exploratory and largely concerned with information giving and taking in new ideas; the last part will be much more forward looking. The break provides an opportunity to emphasise this demarcation, and allows time to pause and make a clear plan for the last few weeks, and to arrange the sessions carefully. While a course is rattling along at one session every week, each session comes around alarmingly quickly. The chance for the tutor to stop, take stock and prepare carefully for the vital final course sessions is all important.

The break can also be used for small groups to meet and work on particular issues and projects to bring back to the main group. Local research can be undertaken and ideas explored in a small group which can then bring back specific action and lines of approach to issues when the course reconvenes. However, over a Christmas break, in particular, other commitments may leave course members little time for projects, and expectations must be realistic.

It will be important to contact all the members of the course during the break to remind them of the date when meetings will start again, and to let them have a programme for the remaining sessions when this is arranged. This can also be an opportunity to bring back lapsed members. The contact can be very informal and personal eg a Christmas card sent at New Year!

FIELD TRIPS

The opportunity to travel together as a group, possibly along with members of another course, to visit projects developed elsewhere is one which has commonly been valued.

The point at which it happens varies: it can be used positively as a point of growth within the course, or as an opportunity to bring the group together again after the course has finished.

The field trip offers several opportunities:

- to allow the group to consolidate by being together intensively over a longer period of time in a fairly closed environment;
- to explore in a very practical way issues of importance to the course and learn from the experience of others;
- to meet together with members of other courses and share experience.

Where possible, use the field trip to look specifically at practical examples of things which the group may be considering developing. Prepare carefully for the visit, try to provide what the group are really looking for and wanting to know, and arrange to meet people who have been substantially involved in the project. It is important to learn the lessons of what went wrong or caused particular difficulties, and this should be made clear to the hosts: a promotional "look what we've done" approach is not always the most helpful to others.

It is important to brief the hosts well as to what is wanted, and be appreciative of their contribution to the course. The RCC field officer of the county being visited (if it is an out-of-county visit) may well be involved in the trip and again should be well prepared. It is probably better to

explore a small number of projects in depth than to look superficially at too many.

As course tutor, it is important to be aware that it is much more difficult to be in control of the group during a field trip, and it is important to strike a balance between an easy-going informal visit and your responsibility to ensure that every advantage is gained from the day. If you have a host, perhaps a field officer from another county, who guides your visit, this is not always easy.

EXAMPLES OF FIELD TRIPS

1. Dymock: Field Trip to Wyre Piddle

The main interest of the group was in carrying out a village appraisal. Contact was made with a group in Worcestershire (suggested by the Hereford and Worcester RCC) whose own appraisal was well under way. Wyre Piddle were very keen to talk to people clearly showing interest in what they were doing, and provided basic written information which was available beforehand. About 8 members of the group went in cars one Saturday morning. There were several features in common between the villages of Wyre Piddle and Dymock, and the visitors were shown around the village by the Parish Council chairman, who then led an interesting discussion in the village hall. Lots of problems were shared, and enthusiasm imparted. The following week, those course members who had gone were able to share the visit with the rest of the group.

Blakeney and Maiden Newton fieldtrip, 1988, on the entrance bridge to Ufculme Mill which was in the process of conversion to a community heritage centre.

2. Castle Cary's Village Halls Tour

The advantages of hiring a coach for all to travel in were shown at Castle Cary in Somerset where the group was interested in the building of a community hall for their town. It was agreed that a whistlestop tour of the best halls within reasonable striking distance (a 60 mile round trip, 6 halls, 3 counties) would be instructive and encouraging. The week before the trip, the group produced a checklist for each member to take with them of aspects of the other halls that would be of particular interest, with headings such as Rooms, Furniture and Fittings, Heating, Facilities and Finance. The beauty of the coach was that other members of the community not on the course could be invited to join the party (25 in all) and experience the enthusiasm of representatives of the halls visited, as well as the delights of a pub lunch arranged half way round. This enjoyable and businesslike trip provided a solid foundation for subsequent action, and proved to be good value for the £50 from the course budget that the coach cost to hire.

3. From Colne Valley to Wirksworth and Hebden Bridge

In West Yorkshire, field trips linked the Colne Valley group to two other communities further ahead with local initiatives for regeneration. The two field trips (to Wirksworth and Hebden Bridge) generated a great deal of enthusiasm. These destinations had been carefully chosen for their relevance to the Colne Valley and its potential for improvements. Whilst members were able to discern apparent differences, the visits captured their imagination as to what can happen given the will, resources and guidance. By fortunate coincidence, shortly after the completion of the course the Civic Trust and the Rural Development Commission announced their joint scheme inviting bids for similar regenerative initiatives elsewhere, and due to its involvement in the Colne Valley course, Yorkshire RCC was able to help the group submit a bid themselves for their own scheme.

4. Role reversal

At Uffculme in Devon, a course was recently launched following the community's involvement as host for two earlier field trips for courses underway in Somerset, Dorset and Gloucestershire. Uffculme has been notably successful in recent years in the fields of housing, job creation and the regeneration of redundant buildings, but can see the function of a community development course to help them reach a stage further. An interesting reversal of roles!

THE LAST SESSION

The final session of the course should be forward looking. By now, the momentum of the course may well have generated a number of ideas for which plans must be made, as well as activities which need progressing. From a feeling of security of meeting regularly as a group with shared plans, a move has to be made back into the community to continue the process. Who will be responsible for which tasks? On whose authority will they be acting? Who can they turn to for advice? What links will they develop with other local organisations? Where will they find support?

Some of these questions will have been considered in some depth during the course, but it is important that they are all looked at before the group disperses for the last time.

Not everyone will wish to commit themselves to a task, but for those who do, their responsibilities must be clear.

GROUP TASKS

What tasks and projects have the group identified for possible action? Some of these may well be under way already – what about the others? How does the group ensure that these ideas are not lost? It is very important that realistic objectives are set in the first place – only a small number of ideas can be effectively pursued at once.

It is important that it is absolutely clear who will be doing what on each task. Several small groups may each take on responsibility for a different project. This should be agreed within the whole group. Within each project group, it is then important to identify tasks and responsibilities. Everyone must know what is expected of them *and* that everyone else knows that too!

Links Back into the Community

Links back into the community are important for two reasons. First, they provide a continuing structure within which activities can develop; second, they are an opportunity to involve more people in the projects emerging from the course. The group of course members will then be seen as a growth point within the community.

It must be decided for each project whether there is an appropriate link, perhaps with the parish council, the village hall committee, WI etc or with a less formal group. It could be that just drawing in one or two individuals from outside the course will be most helpful.

If there is no obvious existing village organisation with which the advancement of a project can be associated, then thought will need to be given to setting up an appropriate new structure. The most common area where this will be necessary is in the field of economic development, and related activities, where finding the right legal framework for a community venture can be a complicated business. However, there is usually advice available, either from a local authority economic development unit, co-operative development agency or via the Rural Community Council. A useful starting point, though predominantly urban in their examples, are the two versions of *A Guide to Development Trusts* produced by Diane Warburton and David Wilcox of Partnership Ltd, 13 Pelham Sq, Brighton BN1 4ET. The shorter version is available from the above address for £2 including postage. The longer is published by HMSO under the title *Creating Development Trusts*, at £11.95.

For courses where members have been drawn from several parishes, the way in which activities continue after the project may be more complicated. Even if there has been only one member from a particular parish, they may well have been encouraged by the course to become involved in, or instigate, a new activity in their own parish. They will need extra encouragement from the group, and time must be given by the whole group to let them plan their own strategy. They may need all the help they can get.

Funding of Projects

Careful consideration has to be given to the funding of projects which have developed out of the course. Many courses will have been set up with a small budget specifically for this purpose, which allows at least a small amount of money to

be allocated for initial expenses. This can be helpful for projects of any size: even those needing to seek significant funding from elsewhere find it very helpful to have a small amount of money in hand, perhaps for publicity or brochure production to help them attract other finance. Some projects only ever need a small amount of seed money, perhaps to fund a new group in its very early stages until it can become self supporting. Having easy access to limited funds can be the key to the success or failure of many projects in their early stages. Substantial delays can kill enthusiasm!

Individual projects considered by the course will have been discussed in great detail, and any resource implications should be known. The course will almost certainly have spent some time looking generally at sources of funding for community projects, but it is very important that, by the final session, a clear stratgegy for funding individual projects developed by the course has been agreed. When looking at links into the community, funding implications should be taken into consideration. For instance, if grant aid is to be sought from some sources they will insist on it being paid to a registered charity, so it may be wise to find a 'home' for the project with a body well placed to apply for such funds.

Four basic groups of funders should be considered:

1. Parish, District, County and Rural Community Councils.

2. Government Agencies and Quangos eg the Rural Development Commission, the Countryside Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council, Rural Development Areas. (Many RDAs have 'Community Chests' for small projects, in addition to their larger programmes).

3. Private firms or public companies which operate locally or nationally (see *A Guide to Company Giving* by The Directory of Social Change, Radius Works, Back Lane, London NW3 1HL).

4. Charities or Trusts. Useful guides to this sector are *The Directory of Grant-Making Trusts* published by the Charities Aid Foundation, 48 Pembery Road, Tunbridge TN9 2JD and *A Guide to the Major Trusts* by The Directory of Social Change. Both are available in most public libraries. Charity Law is complicated: there may be restrictions which prevent direct giving from Trusts to your group. Seek advice on how to approach charities from your Rural Community Council. There are many small, often forgotten, local charities in addition to the big national ones – again your RCC will usually be a good starting point.

Between these four groups there are literally thousands of potential funding agencies. The key is to work out which ones should be approached. This will entail a careful scrutiny of the guides and directories mentioned above, together with some knowledge of the funds available from the first two sources. The Rural Community Council should be able to offer advice here. It is usually a good idea to involve the parish council in projects developed locally, even if only by keeping them well informed. They are an important source of local funding, and their support can often be the key to outside funds.

Then begins the real work. Having decided on perhaps up to 20 funding possibilities,

it is critical to find out more about how each one works. This means an initial letter to ascertain their funding policies in detail, how often they make awards, the amounts available, and what their philosophy is. Bearing in mind the negotiating guidelines given on page 52, a typed application should then be submitted stating briefly what the group is, what it wishes to do, and why, what the benefits will be and the costs involved. It should say whether the parish council has been consulted, and if any 'expert' advice has been taken. The application should be sent with a covering letter to the funding body involved. This format allows the same basic text to be sent with differing explanatory covering letters to a number of funders. (At this stage it should be said that it is quite normal to approach several funders at once. It is very unlikely that all the applications will be successful; it is equally unlikely that any of the bodies will fund the project 100%).

Once the application has been submitted there will be an inevitable long wait. If this proves particularly long, say over four weeks without any reply, someone from the group should make a *friendly* telephone call to find out what is happening. Remember, even bureaucrats are human. They mislay things, and they have too much to do. A friendly telephone call could help your cause along, because it personalises an otherwise anonymous request and makes rejection a little bit more difficult.

Once one funding body offers perhaps 25% towards your project, it is important to tell the others of this. It will show that another examining panel has put faith in you: it will also show that you do not need the full amount of money to make a start. There will, however, be plenty of rejections. These should not be occasions for despair, but for post-mortems. The post-mortem has to decide:

- Was the application rejected because the source had run out of money this year: is an application worth while next year?
- Could the application be improved/changed before making a renewal application? Should the project be changed to make it more fundable?
- Should that particular funding source be abandoned and a different one tried?

Again the friendly telephone call can help here. Most bodies will say - although often not in writing - where you went wrong, and how you can improve your chances in the future.

Finally, when project funding does come in, do not forget to announce it to the press and to praise and thank your funders - even if they have been slow. Without them your project could not exist; you may also need help again one day!

SHOULD THE GROUP CONTINUE TO MEET?

However organised you are about the way in which particular projects are to be followed through, and however absorbing these might be, there will be a sense of something coming to an end when the last session of the course is reached. Course sessions will probably have been a rather unusual, and one hopes special, sharing of ideas and skills, and perhaps a source of inspiration, which people may have regrets about leaving behind.

There is a danger here, however, of wanting to turn back to the comfortable surroundings of the group, to share and learn more, instead of turning outwards to the wider community and meeting the challenge of putting some of these ideas into practice. This challenge is examined in more detail in the final chapter on course outcomes.

Ways of continuing to find support within

the group itself may be important and previous courses have come up with different ideas to achieve this. For example, the group at Castle Cary decided to continue to meet on a monthly basis, rather than weekly, whilst their projects developed through their early stages, persuading the tutor to come along for these monthly sessions, providing he sat at the back of the room! At Dulverton the 'think tank' described on page 83 provided continuity by arguing successfully for a second course, as well as progressing individual projects in the meantime. In other cases, a broader base than course members themselves could provide has been developed for specific projects.

BACK-UP FOR POST-COURSE DEVELOPMENTS

Inevitably time needs to be given to discussing with the group what back-up will be available to them after the last session.

Apart from looking at the funding of emerging projects, the course should have considered in some detail the kinds of external support and advice generally available to community groups, and lists of contacts and sources of information should have been compiled for participants.

However, the key relationship in all this is that established between course members and the fieldworker who has been working alongside the tutor on the course. During the later sessions of the course, the tutor will have been trying to shift involvement with course members from him or herself towards the fieldworker. It should have been made clear that, for most courses, the involvement of the tutor ends as courses draw to a close, while the role of the fieldworker is all important in any follow-up of activities developed as a result of the course.

In this final session, it is very important to make quite clear to course members to whom they should turn for help beyond the course. This should be worked out between the tutor and fieldworker, and their jointly agreed arrangements put to the course. Sometimes the tutor might like to be kept in touch over certain issues, or might be available to talk over fresh ideas, but generally the fieldworker should be the continuing contact as part of his (or her) normal function. There is always a danger that the tutor wishing to remain involved may weaken this link.

If the fieldworker is not confident about his own ability to handle all possible demands that may be made of him, then the tutor should perhaps offer to provide additional support and be available to discuss any problems.

THE TUTOR AND FIELDWORKER – A WORKING PARTNERSHIP

Although some courses have run with only one person responsible for the input, experience has shown that the most successful formula is where a course tutor is appointed, but he or she works in partnership with a field worker, often from the Rural Community Council.

There are three phases to this partnership: preparation for the course; running the course; follow up afterwards. Normally, the responsibility of the tutor would be primarily for the middle phase, the course itself. The fieldworker's responsibility is ongoing: they have a permanent commitment to the area and are therefore an essential link into the community where the course is to be held. They are likely to be involved in making local contacts beforehand, in pre-course publicity, and especially in briefing the tutor on local issues. They would also be the main person responsible for following through with the community any resultant action.

There is a temptation, because of limited staff resources, to suggest that the fieldworker should 'save time' by not being too involved in the course itself, but there are strong arguments to say that this would be a wasted opportunity:

- Shared responsibility brings personal satisfaction.
- New staff can be exposed to the community in a beneficial way ie job development.
- Follow up is more difficult if the fieldworker has not been involved in the course itself, and has not had a chance to form a relationship with the group.
- The tutor may be very detached from the community, may in fact live at quite a distance from it, and need the anchor point that the fieldworker can provide.

From the point of view of the **fieldworker**, the involvement and continuity of a piece of work like this can provide insights and satisfaction difficult to achieve in a wide-ranging job which can fragment talents and energy. This can lead fieldworkers to a better understanding of other communities and a greater personal commitment to their work. Being able to work alongside someone else, with different experience, can also be very rewarding, particularly in a normally isolated job. These courses can be very *enjoyable*.

From the point of view of the **RCC**, the experience offered to its fieldworker can be very valuable, particularly where he or she is relatively new to the job or finding it difficult to get really 'dug in' at a local level. Greater long term benefit may also follow from a working relationship established with one or more communities where *effective* follow up work can be carried out. Finally, the broad analysis of rural change and issues encouraged by the course should help the field worker elsewhere, especially on public platforms.

From the point of view of the **tutor** it can be reassuring to 'anchor' with the fieldworker who has contact with the area and a continuing commitment to it: they should publicly express their appreciation of this to the course members. Remember, this is unlike other adult education courses in this respect: it only makes sense if viewed as part of a long term development plan and could be very dissatisfying if there was no follow up available. It is also rewarding for the tutor to be able to share their involvement with someone else, and if necessary receive constructive criticism.

Regular pre-course planning meetings and then discussions between sessions have a real contribution to make. Discussing and reviewing how things have gone in the previous session, sharing observations of individuals and incidents, honest criticism, planning the next session, agreeing responsibilities and sharing out the many small jobs which have to be done can lead to an excellent working partnership.

WHAT IF...?

When you are planning a course, and especially when, as tutor, the first night approaches fast, various qualms may be felt. These worries will be familiar to those who tutor adults regularly; they may concern the number of students who will enrol, whether visual aids will work, or the possible discovery of an 'expert' in the course group on the first night who apparently knows all the course has to offer before the start. With an unknown format these anxieties may seem particularly acute. At the risk of repeating some points that have already been made, the following question and answer section attempts to counter the worst symptoms. Most of these crises have

arisen somewhere over the past three years and most were tackled successfully in the end!

1. What if nobody turns up on the night?

This is extremely unlikely to happen! Have you the right date in *your* diary? You may be clashing with the World Cup Final or the local harvest supper, but your prior researches should have warned you of this possibility. You have clearly failed in your pre-course publicity. No problem though, the course will have to close. However much more likely is..

2. What if nearly but not quite enough students turn up on the first night?

Many adult/community education institutions insist on a minimum enrolment and subsequent minimum attendance figures being met (usually around the 10-12 mark). Normally a course will be allowed a week or two to reach such a level, but will then be closed if the number has not been achieved. If you have decided to operate through the educational sector (and clear benefits arise from this) you will have to live with such yard-sticks, even if in principle you would happily accept six committed students as being a worth-while number. Of course if you are working informally you may well not be affected in this way and can carry on with the original number (one or two courses have done this very successfully). Otherwise you will need to increase the number.

Although this may seem a formidable task at the time, the process of attracting additional members to the course can in fact greatly contribute to the overall confidence of course members. One example indicates the potential.

> *Take the case at Dulverton on Exmoor in West Somerset, a university based course. Because of distances involved, and apparent local preferences, the format chosen was unusual: four hour sessions every other Saturday (ie seven double sessions). Despite the enthusiasm for the course from town council members and their close co-operation in its planning, on the first Saturday only six people signed in. Even though this confirmed the tutor's doubts about the suitability of a Saturday afternoon, those who had come were sufficiently enthusiastic at the end of the first session to ask that a second meeting be held for which they would canvass vigorously in the town, and this was agreed. The University in the meantime put out a bold positive but honest press-release (see Appendix D) and wrote to each of the five who had enrolled and to the town council reminding them of the position, that the course would have to close unless further members were recruited. At the next session, fifteen signed in, and the course never really looked back. The fact that the original members themselves had had to fight for the course to carry on confirmed their commitment from the start and made the course especially effective later on.*

There is a final point concerning numbers recruited at the start. Although it may be satisfactory to work with a smaller number, there is a philosophical argument for aiming for 10 – 12+, and this is that community development courses claim to act via a community perspective on issues. A very small recruitment may at least be perceived as inhibiting such a perspective, and restrict both analysis and subsequent action.

3. What if numbers dwindle after the first or

second night?

This can happen on a single night due to a major counter attraction in the locality. If some village event of major proportions is looming then clearly some flexibility in the course programme is advisable. It may, for example, be a good idea to break for school half-term. On the other hand there is always something else going on in a village, and you have to be prepared for one or two people (though not the same people) not appearing each night.

For this reason it is very important to establish various means of ensuring continuity between sessions; this can be assisted by a course pack to which photocopied material relating to sessions is added, by the early production of a provisional course programme, possibly by some form of minutes, and most importantly by achieving a good level of participation by course members right from the start. The Dulverton group already mentioned in the previous answer took this into their own hands by establishing their own independent 'think tank' which met between sessions independently of the tutors. This proved to be a great success.

4. What if numbers drop suddenly in the middle of the course?

Courses tend to shift at around the half way stage from information giving and analysis towards the design of practical project work and action. This is a generalisation, but there is a danger, especially if a natural break such as the Christmas or Easter holiday coincides, that there may be a sudden drop in attendance for the more unfamiliar (ie the second) part of the course. This can be avoided by the steady integration of discussion on practical project work into the main structure of the course. In this way during the early stages possible lines of action can be identified and course members' interest registered well before the break. The break then becomes an asset rather than a worry, as it allows for progress to be made on project work. A letter sent to each course member during such a break, indeed any form of contact by the tutor, can prove invaluable.

5. What if you want to 'bring out' some course members who have apparently been less involved than others in discussion, or some other way inhibited by the format of the course?

A tutor will always need to be aware of whether individual members of a course are satisfied with what is happening. However much the majority of the group seems to be engaged in discussion and course activity, it is possible that some feel left behind or excluded. This is easier to look out for if two tutors are involved, or more commonly if there is a supporting fieldworker present working in tandem with the tutor and able to provide a second, more detached and therefore critical view of how individuals are responding to the course.

Not all participants, of course, will have similar expectations. For example some will be very interested in reading lists and book boxes, others not at all, and planning of the course and its structure will need to take account of such variations. However all members will want to contribute in some way and this cannot happen if individual members feel constrained. Reasons for their feeling inhibited might include the following three factors:–

- They may feel uncomfortable with the course's format, either being too formal (or not formal enough!).
- They may feel nervous because of what they perceive as their own lack of experience in certain key areas under discussion. It often

takes a while for the great value of members' own local knowledge and experience as the foundation of the course to sink home.

- Perhaps the most common 'turn off' is the apparent domination of course activity, especially open discussion, by one or two other members of the group who may be seen as opinionated, however well meaning.

Much can be done to alleviate these constraints, even the last of the three (see answer 6 below). The general rule is for tutors to start the course as they mean to go on and demonstrate that the contributions of all members will be accepted and valued and that each will have an equal chance to be involved in discussion and related activity. This commitment will be demonstrated right from the start by the manner of introduction of each individual, the seating plan, the relationship established by the tutor with individual members and the way structured exercises are used to break any single pattern of participation. For example the best and worst futures exercise (described on page 62) can quietly move the focus from individuals' views towards small group discussion followed by synthesis of differing views.

In the structuring of course activities, especially group work, tutors have a tool they can employ to help 'bring out' certain individuals if they feel this is appropriate. This can equally apply to their coping with a dominant individual (see next answer); the responsibility for completing a simple but necessary task on behalf of others, for example reporting back on a group session, typing out notes on some project work, or researching an aspect of community life as presented in the local press, can make a great difference to the individual's commitment to the course. The key thing is that individual members feel that their contributions count, and that it is their own contribution and not something blandly diluted by the tutor or another member. In this respect one vital function of the tutor is to reflect past contributions back to the group. In recapping, perhaps at the beginning of a session briefly looking back to earlier discussion, great care should be taken to show attention to detail and to acknowledge the origins of contributions made. Ownership of the course by its members and bonding between individual members can then follow.

6. What if an individual looks like becoming an over-dominant force within the group?

Research has shown that more adult students leave courses because they do not get on with their fellow students than because they dislike their tutors'. While this may provide some comfort for tutors, it also underlines the tutor's responsibility to manage a course in such a way that the likelihood of students falling out is reduced. Following on from the previous answer, one can identify the over-dominant member as a particular worry in this respect and it may be helpful to consider such an individual in one of two contrasting characterisations:-

- The busy activist who is experienced and knowledgeable in many of the areas likely to be covered by the course. Typically this person might be a successful local councillor.
- The opinionated individual who has a view on everything, and plenty of hobby horses to match, but is lacking sensitivity to other members' points of view or much idea of the practical application of his own.

The first thing to be said about the potentially dominant individual is that they may not necessarily be a liability at all. The first of our

two examples may be especially useful, since busy activists can contribute from their experience and use their contacts for the course. However, what they may well require is some appropriate framework or guidance provided by the tutor (and probably by other members too) so that they can contribute their expertise without overwhelming everyone else. After all, the atmosphere of the course should be rather different from that of some other occasions with which they may be more familiar eg the combative feeling of many public meetings or the 'cut and thrust' of local political debate.

The general rule for coping with either of our two examples is for the tutor to identify the potential difficulty early on and then consider the following avoiding actions:

- Ask the individual concerned to perform a task on behalf of the group. A busy councillor, for example, may be able to obtain very useful material from the local planning department or research a particular subject to be presented to the course. Asking the individual to work in a structured way assists their contribution to become channelled in a constructive way for the whole group.
- Ask the individual to perform an unfamiliar or uncharacteristic task, which may limit the likelihood of their intervening unhelpfully. For example, when course members are divided into smaller discussion groups the over-dominant member might be given the role of scribe, reporting back *other* members' views.
- Anticipating an occasion when there may be problems, have a quiet word beforehand with the individual to let them know that you are aware that they are knowledgeable about the subject, but that you are anxious for others to have a chance to catch up on this and ask for their assistance in this.

In the experience of RAE tutors so far, it has been very rare for an individual member to spoil a group. By far the majority of busy, knowledgeable local people attracted to courses are sensitive to others and, given some structure, pitfalls can be avoided. However in the end the ultimate sanction is the group's itself; it will very likely take the responsibility of letting an overdominant member know if they are spoiling the course.

7. What if you do not get the support of the local Parish Council?

This is not as uncommon a problem as it may sound. Everything should be done during the pre-course period to inform and involve parish councils, as has been discussed already. However if you fail to obtain the active support of a parish council, what then?

The most common problem is no reaction, rather than outright hostility. There has been at least one case of the Chairman or Clerk of a Council putting the introductory letter behind their clock and the course never being discussed

Over-dominant course members must be handled carefully!

by the Council. It can therefore be worthwhile deliberately approaching some individual councillors during the pre-course period, as well as the council as a whole. Having done all you can to make a parish council aware of a course, councillors' absence from it, or indeed even the Council's apparent opposition to it (only likely to happen very rarely), should not be sufficient reason for abandoning it.

The critical point here is that a course can look at Parish Councils in a generic way, showing the strengths and weaknesses of the institution without personalising a presentation by direct reference to the local situation. The information sheet reproduced in Appendix C illustrates one way of doing this, presenting a summary of the powers of local councils alongside a case study using the insight of a relatively new, but effective councillor. On other occasions, roleplay and quizzes (usually aided by County Parish Councils' Associations) have been used to effect. It is then up to the course members themselves to become interested in the local council's activities if they wish and to challenge its present members at the next election if desired.

8. What if a guest speaker doesn't turn up, or your favourite visual aid doesn't work?

Spontaneity is the stuff of success! Any RAE course should be able to stand the inclusion of an unplanned informal session. Depending upon the stage of the course reached, an apparent disaster like this can be turned to advantage by improvisation, surprising course members (and the tutor!) into unexpected directions. It is therefore worth preparing a diversionary tactic ready for a situation such as this. It may mean bringing forward some material designed for a later session or using the drama of the occasion to encourage a review of progress so far. Usually the stage of the course reached will suggest the appropriate activity.

One factor that distinguishes a rural evening class from its urban counterpart is that access to the course for participants travelling any distance in wintertime may occasionally be restricted by bad weather. To avoid difficulties, an advance warning system (usually involving a single course member from the host community) should be established so that the tutor can arrange for a message to be passed around in good time. The fact that the course does manage to assemble on inclement nights can add largely to the course's sense of identity and purpose.

9. What if it looks likely that you will run out of time and be unable to cover all the ground you want within formal sessions?

Although it may seem hard to believe at the start, this is a common difficulty and requires careful planning of the later stages of the course. As will be discussed in the next chapter on outcomes and follow-up, it is very important that outstanding lines of activity resulting from the course should be carefully identified and progressed. This means that, rather than try to cram in a wide assortment of odds and ends on the last night that have not been covered previously on the course, it is preferable to recap over past sessions and discuss exactly how specific ideas and projects are to be taken forward. If there are obvious areas not covered during the course there may be some scope for further individual sessions at some point (distinct from the course itself) or indeed another full-blown course!

1. *Adults Learning* (1977) by Jennifer Rogers, Open University.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

We have already argued that one of the main strengths of these courses is that they can offer a structure within which participants can follow through their own ideas to meet their community's needs into practical action. In other words the courses should produce concrete end results of demonstrable practical benefit to the rest of the community.

This emphasis on the importance of an end result is in no way to deny the intrinsic value of the *process* of the course. Many have found their participation in courses to have been an unusually interesting experience in its own right and argue that a course's success should not simply be measured in terms of its obvious outcomes. Undoubtedly too much emphasis can be given, especially during the early stages, to **product** (the outcome of a course) at the expense of **process** (the development of confidence and determination to achieve within the group): far better to leave course members confident in their own abilities to advance various approaches initiated during the course and then ready to develop others when appropriate.

However it is essential that it is recognised that the yardstick of practical achievements generated by courses *will* be applied to justify the involvement of a range of external agencies and resources, and also to convince some within the community concerned, and other communities, of the value of the process. To this extent the end result becomes an important justification of the process.

Perhaps the first thing to remember about the outcomes of courses is to avoid the expectation that there will be immediate results in every area of interest to course members. Many of the issues that members will wish to tackle will be complex, and in some cases resulting action will require a long lead-in time (for example this will almost certainly be the case with housing association projects). The determination of other issues may prove to be out of local hands to such an extent that the course's principal objective should be analysis rather than any pro-active prompting. However there are usually some outcomes which can be pursued relatively simply and be achieved either during the course itself or, more likely, soon after its conclusion. These will prove to be especially useful in establishing a track record that will help advance more complicated objectives, especially when negotiations with potential funding bodies or presentations to the media are required. Every effort should therefore be made by the tutor to distinguish those goals which can be readily achieved from others which require a longer-term approach.

We can see this more clearly when looking at examples of outcomes of courses that have already run. The first three courses held under the Project's auspices, during the winter of 1984/5, were in the villages of Mosterton in Dorset and Hindon in Wiltshire, and in the Somerset town of Castle Cary. At the time of writing this handbook, now nearly four years later, there have been recent developments at Mosterton and at Castle Cary in part attributable to the effects of the courses. At Mosterton, following on from a village appraisal, negotiations are now underway to return the village to its former parish status. At Castle Cary a 15 seater minibus, complete with a tail-lift facility for the disabled, has just been launched for the general benefit of the community. This achievement has built upon an interest cultivated during the course in improving public transport in the area, especially for young people, through the community's involvement in

transport planning. The first initiative of course members in this field was the (unsuccessful) introduction of an experimental return bus service to the nearby entertainment centre at Yeovil on Saturdays. These two examples show how some developments may be considerably slower in being realised than other more tangible objectives.

HALSTOCK

'AT HOME'

Dung goes under the hammer

Saturday August 1s

10·30am – 5·

Table 5 brings together all the courses with which the Project has been associated up until the end of the 1987/88 academic year and shows, in summary, the main issues tackled and the types of project emerging. The implications of the successful development of these for the tutor and supporting fieldworker clearly vary according to the scale of the involvement and resources required for each. The challenge of helping advance such projects once they are emerging will be familiar ground for community workers, but to what extent can a tutor anticipate, and therefore prepare for, likely lines of activity resulting from a course?

Remembering all we have already said about balancing product with process, and not forcing an outcome onto a group, it is probably worth the tutor's while spending some preparation time asking two kinds of question related to outcome. Firstly, and this will be a normal part of the pre-course research undertaken by the planning group for each course, what are the most obvious outcomes likely to be of interest to members of the course group? If, for example, there seems to be a need for a community hall, or concern about a by-pass, then the tutor can prepare accordingly in the fairly certain knowledge that this will be relevant to the group concerned, and help them advance more quickly if required. The second, more complicated question, and one which will be relevant throughout the course, concerns the timescale of likely achievement. For example some pieces of work undertaken by individual course members, or small groups of course members, might well be achieved during the course itself, whilst short publicity and promotional campaigns, or the foundation of new community organisations might be achieved in the mid-term, with the development of substantial projects requiring both resources and further local participation being graded long-term. Such a grading, which can be tabulated fairly simply as shown in Table 4, will help the tutor balance short and long-term objectives, thus maintaining the coherence and sense of achievement of the course group. Reference material relating to specific outcomes can be found in the earlier section of this book devoted to the course curriculum (Chapter 3), but in any event the supporting fieldworker should be able to help provide guidance.

The golden rule relating to outcomes is that course members are seen to do the work, **not** the tutor!

Village Open Day and new village hall..... just two of the successful outcomes from Halstock's course. (Dorset Evening Echo 2 March 1988)

Table 4
Hypothetical Grading of Possible Outcomes of a Course

Short-term
Student's own research
Press conference
Local survey
Fundraising
Mid-term
Local newsletter
Promotional campaign
Village appraisal
Founding of local club/association
Further adult education
Long-term
Community hall project
Housing project
Local development trust
Campaign to change external authority's policy

COURSE EVALUATION

Having put a great deal of effort into organising a course, it will be useful to conduct an evaluation of its effectiveness at the time of its conclusion. This will mean asking course members for their views and, if part of a rolling programme of courses, returning to a place a year or two afterwards to see the longer-term results, making comparisons with other examples. A suggested wording for a questionnaire issued to course members is included as Appendix E.

It may well also be useful to contact some outside contributors to the course to hear their views, particularly if they are associated with funding bodies on whom the viability of future courses depend. Obviously, if they are enthusiastic this will help; but, even with misgivings, their participation can be helpful in ironing out design faults or poor performance.

Table 5 Course Outcomes

County	1984/85	Location of Course: 85/86	86/87	87/88	Core attendance	Number of sessions	Field trip	Sponsoring agencies	Main issue/projects arising
Avon		Marshfield			12		Yes	RCC/University	Newsletter/local government
Derbyshire				Darwich Flagg*	6	10	Yes	RCC/University	Bus Club/Oral History/Youth Club Recreation
				Middleton	10	8	Yes	RCC/University	Formation of new Parish/Village History/ Village Hall
Devon			Membury		22	9	No	RCC	Village Hall/Village Trail/Newsletter
			South Molton		9	8	No	RCC	North Molton Newsletter
			Gt Torrington		10	9	No	RCC	Village Appraisals Day/Village History/Fundraising
Dorset	Mosterton				11		Yes	RCC/University	Village appraisal/RDA promotion/housing/ employment
		Shillingstone			19		Yes	RCC/University	Village appraisal/negotiation with local estate (Durweston)
			Halstock		18		No	RDP/University	New Village Hall/archeological site/housing & transport needs surveys, lunch club/fundraising (Village open day)
				Maiden Newton	21*		Yes	RDP/University	Events listings/Village Hall/community development fund/village appraisal
Durham			Thorniey		10	20	No	RCC/WEA	Health Group/Appraisal/Tourism Promotion (Leaflet)/Local Newspaper
Gloucestershire			Blakeney		12		Yes	RDP/University	Local council/tourism promotion/newsletter/use of new hall/sites of industry
				Dymock	30*		Yes	RCC/University	Village appraisal/Housing association
Humberside			Kirton*					RCC/University	Resource and Information Centre
Kent			New Romney		7	10	No	VSC/LEA	Transport and Community Bus Employment/
				Wittersham	8	5	No	VSC	Tourism/Participation

County	Location of Courses 1984/85	85/86	86/87	87/88	Core attendance	Number of sessions	Field trip	Sponsoring agencies	Main issue/projects arising
Shropshire			Ellesmere		14	15	Yes	RCC/WEA	Day Centre Project/Further Adult Education/Local Resources Centre/Formation of Community Association/Formation of Community Newsletter
			Trefonen		6	13	Yes	RCC/WEA	Village Hall and Playing Field improvements/ Further Adult Education
Somerset	Castle Cary				13		Yes	RCC/University	Community Centre/Community Bus/tourism promotion
		Crowcombe			12		No	RCC/University	Local plan/community use of school/RDA
		Evercreech*			8			RCC/University	
			Dulverton		14		Yes	RDP/University	Tourism promotion/Local Development trust
				Dulverton	15*		No	RDP/University	Heritage centre/Health Service/Local exhibition and Australian link
Suffolk				Stanton	16	10	No	RCC/University	Local Video/Transport for Elderly/Summer Playscheme/Sheltered housing scheme/ Library provision
Sussex				Rye*				RCC	
Wiltshire	Hindon				15		Yes	RCC/University	Meeting of local parishes/Village Hall improvements/photography record
		Mere			12		Yes	RCC/University	Day centre provision/Local housing needs/ Industrial estate site
Yorkshire			Slaithwaite		15	10	Yes (2)	RCC/University	Formation of New Parish/Civic Trust Initiative/Appraisal/Further classes
				Cornholme	8	10	No	RCC/WEA/Univ.	Attraction of Civic Trust Forum

*Indicates course failed to run its full length

Core attendance indicates regular attenders – in some cases enrolments were higher.

The main issue/projects arising are those prominently discussed, many of which have resulted in subsequent action.

RCC = Rural Community Council

VSC = Voluntary Service Council

WEA = Workers Education Association

LEA = Local Education Authority

POSTSCRIPT

In assembling this handbook we have become aware of the interest, and, to some extent, the resources available to enable adult educational approaches become a vehicle for community development. It has been reassuring to find that there is a tradition of rural work in this field, and to have learnt of vigorous examples earlier this century, especially inter-war, of village classes dealing with the practicalities of life at that time. One of the principal reasons for our interest in producing this handbook, and for the course work with which it is associated, has been to find a form of rural educational activity relevant to today's issues. Unfortunately, as we have seen, adult education provision is currently under considerable budgetary pressure, and therefore tends to suffer from over-cautious programming, just at a time when these issues demand an informed response from today's rural communities.

However, despite these limitations, we have found that there is an enthusiasm in many quarters to experiment and innovate, to provide a more accessible range of adult provision in rural areas. This means that, even though the total number of rural adult classes is diminishing, the quality of the best provision may in fact be improving, especially in areas related to our concern for the future of rural communities as a whole.

Some of this innovation has led to the launch of a range of provision which is effective because of the distinct identity of the community on which it is centred. A good, if rather unusual, example of this is the relatively new further education college on Skye, *Sabhal Mhor Ostaig*, with its range of formal business and new technology courses taught in Gaelic, mixed with an extensive, more informal, community use of the College's facilities; once the attractions of centralised provision are questioned, there is potential for broad community-based provision like this in any rural community. The extent to which new technology features in educational programmes will also be a factor. As the slogan spotted in a Scottish rural secondary school points out, "Technology eats miles!". Similarly, open and distance learning packages are becoming increasingly available for the more isolated, with, for example, the Open College and the Open University both offering rural options now.

Other providers are targeting courses at people with specific difficulties exacerbated by their living in rural areas. The national REPLAN programme is an example of this with a 'rural needs' element providing courses, a lively bulletin and, recently, a resource pack to improve educational opportunities.[1] A similar objective, the targeting of unemployed and unwaged adult students, has been provided by West Mercia WEA with its rural 'Second Chance' course in Hereford and Warwickshire.[2]

Quite a few questions have been raised about the comparison between targeted approaches, with their deliberately restricted recruitment (including sometimes, for example, individual pre-course interviews to ensure that the format is suited to prospective students) and the 'open' courses of the type described in this handbook, whose success largely depends upon a wide recruitment from throughout a community. There are important differences, with the targeted course concentrating on personal development goals, even if community development concepts have been used as a backcloth. However, it would be wrong to see open community development courses as being irrelevant to the special needs of individuals in this context. Many of the courses described here have, for example, attracted

people who are out of work, and some of these course members have used the course, together with other resources, as a platform for subsequent economic activity. For some of these, the open nature of the course itself may have seemed an attraction.

So it is important not to exaggerate differences between the approaches. They can be seen in many ways as being complementary. Although directed at individuals, the relevant targeted course will also address concerns far broader than the job prospects of the individual participant, and aim to establish a context within which their circumstances can be better understood. As the REPLAN Rural Needs Pack puts it, in a thorough discussion of community and personal development objectives:

● *"Unwaged people are not only concerned about their job prospects. They are also concerned about their family, their health, their finances, their role within the community and their personal aspirations. To work effectively with them means working effectively with their families and communities too. To improve learning opportunities for unwaged people means improving them for their families and communities too. Their experience, therefore, can be seen as a focus for much of the change currently occuring in the countryside".* ●

The writers of the REPLAN resource pack also raise the intriguing thought that although community development and education are usually seen as having different foci (group experience and personal development goals respectively), in practice each approach echoes the other. Educationalists may in fact be very experienced in handling and working with groups, whilst community workers need to a large extent to work with individuals, one-to-one, to reach the broader group. This suggests plenty of scope for co-operation in practice!

Those involved with community development courses who have previously had a predominance of either educational or community development experience will certainly find it worthwhile to reflect on how the two approaches may be combined in a compatible way. Table 6, though inevitably a simplification, contrasts various features of the two approaches:

Table 6

Community Development Courses Require Complimentary Combination Of:

Adult Education	Community Development
familiar approach (non-threatening?)	unfamiliar
finite	open-ended
information based	action-oriented
personal focus	community focus
series of sessions accepted	need 'excuse' for visits

A similar calculation of the compatibility of the skills of those actually involved in organising and tutoring a specific course will indicate the potential strengths of their partnership, and the roles each should assume during the course.

Apart from community development courses of the type we have concentrated on, other related initiatives are currently underway which display a similar interest in education as a vehicle for rural community development. Two, both of which incidentally have also been supported by the Rural Development Commission, are worth a specific mention as they too aim for 'open' recruitment, at least in part. One

is the national 'Community Action' training programme run by the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and the other a local initiative in Norfolk.

NFWI's 'Community Action' project is significant not only because of its concern with current rural issues and the practical leadership skills required by communities to participate successfully, but also because of its aim to involve non WI members in the programme. This in fact was a condition of funding, and shows the way for future cross-sectoral training work in the voluntary sector.

The Norfolk REAP (Rural Education for Adults Project) has brought together many of the local agencies we have mentioned in this book to launch a substantial example of local integrated action. Using five part-time community workers, each based in a relatively remote rural part of West or North Norfolk (some 50 parishes in all), the Project is focussing on the broad educational needs of the communities concerned. The community workers act as 'animateurs' to encourage bids (both from communities and from individuals) for relevant educational provision, and act as a bridge between providers and consumers. It is also a feature of the Project that local residents have been recruited as the animateurs.

1. REPLAN is the Department of Education and Science's programme to improve the educational opportunities available to unemployed adults. For further details of the REPLAN Rural Needs Resource Pack, contact REPLAN at NIACE, 196 De Montford Street, Leicester, LE1 7GE. Telephone 0533 551451.

2. See report *Rural Second Chance 1986-87* by Stephen Roberts, available from West Mercia District WEA, 9-11 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6BH. Telephone 021 643 0717/8.

In conclusion, it is inevitable that a handbook will concentrate on detail, and on practical questions, at the expense of more reflective analysis. Nevertheless, we hope that through this detail some picture has emerged of how enjoyable and satisfying it can be to become involved in community development courses, either as a tutor/organiser on the one hand, or indeed as a participant. The indications are that the combination of adult education and rural community development can be an attractive and effective catalyst to local community action. We, at ACRE, would very much welcome reports of courses launched, or related activities, across the country, and will act as a sorting house for this emerging field of rural development work. Please send your reports to:

The ACRE Rural Adult Education Project
ACRE · Stroud Road
Cirencester · Glos GL7 6JR

Community Development Courses in the West of Ireland: University College, Galway

University College, Galway is the third level academic institution to which Western communities naturally turn, being located centrally on the West Coast and conducting a number of its courses through Irish. From 1949 to 1969 a limited number of economic and social science courses were included in its programme of adult education. These were run for the Counties of Connacht and County Clare, but for their lectures students had to travel to a very few urban centres such as Sligo, Ennis and Galway itself. The restricted number of teaching venues was a product of the limited resources available at the time, which also considerably reduced the courses' potential intake.

A review of UCG's extra-mural activities was undertaken in 1968. This resulted in an expansion of its involvement in Western communities from 1969 onwards with, by 1975, up to two dozen centres being used for lectures in an extended region (by now including Counties Donegal, Offaly and West Meath). At this stage the programme included a choice of two diploma courses as well as unaccredited lectures on various topics. One of the two diploma courses offered was in Social Action. It included up to 300 hours of formal lectures over the two year period, covering among other subjects, sociology, economics, communications, applied social sciences and management studies. As the course prospectus stated these were designed to:

● *"equip and encourage leaders and potential leaders of the community with the knowledge and skills necessary, and to motivate them to make their involvement in local communities more effective".* ●

These courses proved to be popular, but by 1979 the Board of Extra-Mural Studies at UCG realised that a change was needed, principally for two reasons:

(ii) economies were required so there was pressure to look for a lower cost approach;

(iii) more significantly, the course tutors had come to see that the diploma course teaching process was too rigid for the subject matter.

Through the present programme they are teaching what they now term 'community development' on a non-diploma basis.

The present courses are each located within the single village or small rural town for which they are designed and usually take place in a local school building or community hall. They last for anything between twelve and twenty weeks, held over the winter, with weekly two hour evening classes providing the core. Perhaps the most useful way to illustrate their content is to quote from the prospectus of one of the 1983/84 courses, that was held at Tubbercurry in Co. Sligo:

● *"the aim of the course is to encourage adults to become more aware of their communities and more involved in developing their area. The course will consist of some lectures as well as informal class discussion on relevant topics. It will concentrate on the study of communities in Ireland and on relevant developments which have taken place in other parts of the country. Emphasis, however, will not be solely on study through textbooks, but instead, participants will be involved in a special project study designed to assess the potential for development of resources in their area and to report the feasibility of various projects which will be of value to the local community. Students will be guided and supported in these*

surveys by the course tutor and will have the professional advice and support of University College Galway staff and other specialists." ●

Although there is a good deal of flexibility in establishing course content, topics advertised to be covered in this particular case include:

- Community Development – a study of what it involves;
- Background – change in the West of Ireland:
- Community Councils and Development Associations;
- Co-operatives;
- The "Combat Poverty" Programme;
- Community Involvement in Agriculture;
- Community Groups and Industry;
- Social Services and Local Communities;
- Community Involvement in Tourism.

Classes which the researcher joined at Tubbercurry and at Ballaghaderreen in Co. Roscommon were impressive for their content, form, imagination and scope. In both places, despite difficult circumstances, participants were finding abilities in themselves that they had been unaware of, and were developing interests which clearly had great potential for benefiting their communities. As one participant at Ballaghaderreen, a young local factory production manager said:

● *"I had a number of ideas for community development (here) and I just wanted to see how these would augur with outside professionals who have a lot of experience in this field and had successfully guided communities and Community Councils through development stages."* ●

Among the numerous successes of previous courses in this programme the following practical achievements can be counted: the revitalisation of Community Councils, the launch of Credit Unions, an experimental 'biomass' project, researching the case for restoring an agricultural home advisory service, the promotion of tourism, resource surveys, the launch of youth clubs, local newsletters and local information centres. It is impossible to quantify the parallel development of local expertise and confidence by means of the courses, but the experience of the tutors themselves, which has developed alongside, will soon be encapsulated in the publication of a textbook based upon their involvement so far.

To compare this programme with its predecessor, the University is now adopting more of a 'bottom up' community development approach than before, aimed more at inspiring participation rather than cultivating leadership, though of course the two are not necessarily separate objectives. Participants require no special academic qualifications at the start and face no examinations at the end. The yardstick of success is practical achievement and personal development.

Apart from the beneficial effects on the communities which have so far taken part in this new approach it is noteworthy for two other reasons:

(i) it has been developed due to the personal commitment of those involved in teaching and organising it, in a new and untested area for an academic institution (certainly within the British Isles); there may well have been hostility to the novelty of this approach within university circles accustomed to teaching academically 'respectable' subjects in which progress is easier to measure. Much of the tuition is carried out on top of busy full-time university schedules, and involves travelling

considerable distances (e.g. the round trip from Galway to Tubbercurry is 180 miles).

(ii) this experiment has occurred at a time of recession and therefore has, inevitably, been underfinanced. Not only is there no single academic who can concentrate exclusively on the programme but also most of the lectures have been given by the course tutors rather than the wide range of visiting lecturers originally planned. Despite the disadvantages of this loss, in one way it may have made the courses more coherent by concentrating on the interaction between one (or two) lecturers and the small class group, a relationship which, when it works, can be a powerful stimulus for practical achievement.

At present the courses are financed from a number of sources; apart from the University itself local education authorities (County Vocational Committees) contribute a third of the cost and students are themselves expected to pay £1 per night attended. There has recently been talk of raising these fees, but this has been resisted on the grounds that such a rise might well put off potential students. It is argued by the present tutors that the cost to the students could be reduced or even abolished without altering the financial base of the programme overmuch; again, it might be reasonable not to expect those who are going to carry out practical voluntary work for their community to have to pay for the privilege. In addition to the sources already mentioned, financial contributions have also been received from development agencies such as *Udarás na Gaeltachta*, the Industrial Development Agency and various County Development Teams. This has been invaluable in allowing for small extensions to the programme, for example field visits to other communities to examine their achievements on the spot, or, in the case of *Udarás na Gaeltachta*, the teaching of a course through Irish. In the long term the follow-up afforded to projects initiated through the courses will be crucial, which makes the involvement of the development agencies all the more welcome.

To anyone interested in a community development approach it is encouraging to see this small but significant disposition of resources at the discretion of a local community. It also seems to have won the University a wider appreciation among the communities it serves. Course tutors have been very modest about its achievements so far, quite rightly pointing out that rural communities face very severe pressures against which practical achievements must be measured.

Perhaps the last word on the programme should go to Chris Curtin, one of the most experienced course tutors. Here he describes the new methodology being adopted by the tutors:-

● *"We are now trying to incorporate academic or analytical ideas on communities and community development together with people's* **own** *experiences and trying to relate the two together. This is a challenging approach and different to one normally expected in a University environment... The key distinction between the purely academic setting and the involvement of the community, in the wider area, is that many academics see lecturing as the imparting of information on minds that are sitting there in front of you; this type of activity would clearly involve some level of imparting information, but also trying to tease out and work out people's own analysis of the situation they are facing, what the difficulties are, and what the best strategies are... I would tend to say that there are some differences in the way information is*

imparted in this programme (compared to an academic setting) – one is facing a group of people who are not full-time, who aren't reading books on a full-time basis, who haven't a library at their disposal, and so on; there is a clear difference in the approach there. But in other ways there is a clear similarity – both groups respond to treatment which seeks to bring out their potential rather than impose ideas on them. The approach which takes people for what they are is clearly more challenging. To see what ideas they have, to see how your ideas stand up to what they have to say is the approach which I am really interested in, and consider the formal lecture where one stands up and pontificates in front of an audience for an hour to be extremely boring." ●

From: *The Periphery is the Centre* (1985) by Ian Scott, Arkleton Trust.

Examples of Course Programmes

DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY COURSE

at Greenford Primary School, Maiden Newton, Mondays 7.30pm

PROGRAMME

SEP 28th : Introduction, aims and scope of the course. The national debate about the future of the countryside and three possible scenarios – dependency, modernisation and community development. Best and worst futures for Maiden Newton.

OCT 5th : Historic film '24 Square Miles'. Life in rural Oxfordshire in the 1940's and present day contrasts. The standard of public services in rural areas and the level of public investment.

OCT 12th : Parish population change, the national and local picture. The effect of planning controls on population movement and likely trends for the future, with **Brian Woodruffe** of Southampton University.

OCT 19th : History of the planning system and current planning policy in the Maiden Newton area after the Dorset Structure Plan, with **Charles Cordy** of Dorset County Planning Department. Preliminary outline of opportunities offered by Rural Development Area status with **Kath Barnett**, RDA Field Officer.

OCT 26th : The nature of community development. Case studies from Western Ireland, Connemara West Ltd of Letterfrack, Co Galway, and West Kerry Community Co-operative and the context in which they have evolved.

NOV 2nd : Developers and the rural environment, anticipating change, design points, interpreting development plans and initiating local housing projects (eg housing associations), with **Graham Saunders**, rural architect, Bridport.

NOV 9th : Summary of 1st half of course. Rural housing and the current housing White Paper with **Kath Barnett**. Housing demand relative to housing need and rural aspects of the problem. The role of housing need surveys and parish action – Cerne Valley housing scheme and other examples. Parish maps and village appraisals with the video presentation, 'The Local Jigsaw'.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

JAN 11th : A review of local community projects : the village hall, the Fancy Fayre, an events diary. Present achievements and future targets. Key sites in the village. The origins, powers and responsibilities of parish councils.

JAN 18th : Low impact tourism in Europe and its contribution to the rural economy. Creating a heritage centre, the Wirksworth example. Local resources for tourism, with **Bernard Lane** of Bristol University.

JAN 25th : Discussion on the merits of tourism promotion. A village appraisal, the main topics, the questionnaire (1)

FEB 1st : Health and community care; quiz and discussion on local provision. Topics and questionnaire for a village appraisal (2)

FEB 8th : The future of rural public transport, social car schemes ('country cars'), rural transport needs surveys and public services, with **Eunice Willis**, County Transport Adviser, Dorset County Council, (who mentioned local transport representative, **Dick Sims**, brought Development Commission video 'Cross Country' and referred to funds available for initiatives in the Rural Transport Development Fund).

FEB 15th : The future of agriculture. The effects of overproduction and likely future trends in farming, with **Ray Bere**.
A possible plan of action for launching a village appraisal. An outline of the potential contribution of a locally managed community development fund to community projects.

FEB 22nd : Conclusion of the course. Summary of analysis, the immediate future of current local projects, and pointers to the future of rural areas in general.

VISITING GUEST SPEAKERS' TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Kath Barnett, c/o Beaminster Town Council Office, Beaminster 863033
or c/o Dorset Community Council, Dorchester 62270
Ray Bere, Powerstock 216
Charles Cordy, County Planning Dept, Dorchester 251000
Bernard Lane, University of Bristol, 0272 303620
Graham Saunders, Netherbury 222
Ian Scott, 2 Knapps Hill Cottages, Buckland Newton, B.N. 455
Eunice Willis, County Surveyor's Department, County Hall, Dorch 251000

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DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY COURSE

at BLAKENEY VILLAGE HALL
Tuesdays at 7.30p.m.
PROGRAMME

MAR 3rd : Introduction and welcome. Aims and scope of the course. History of rural development, State intervention in the countryside, and the developing role of the voluntary sector. The current national debate about the future of rural Britain. Future scenarios for Blakeney – best and worst outcomes.

MAR 10th : Population change and movement in the countryside. Trends at home and abroad. CASE STUDY : WIRKSWORTH, DERBYSHIRE with **Bernard Lane**.

MAR 17th : The process of community development – definitions and examples. Rural community development in Ireland. CASE STUDY : CONNEMARA WEST LTD, LETTERFRACK, Co GALWAY.

MAR 24th : The local context : The Rural Development Area and the planning system with **Jim Stewart**. Examples from the Rural Development Programme – the search for potential workshops.

MAR 31st : Origins, powers and responsibilities of parish councils, with **Stephen Wright**. The staging of a mock parish council meeting.

APR 7th : Review of local projects : Blakeney Red Pear revival
: Local workshops search
: Monthly marts in village hall
: Local support scheme for unemployed
: Local newsletter
: Village appraisal
: Skills survey leading to an enterprise
: Assistance to play project
: Hall Car Park
: Minibus link between villages and college campuses
: Holiday twinning with Blakeney, Norfolk
: Lunch club
: Tea dance

EASTER BREAK

APR 27th : Parallels from Europe. Different approaches to rural development with **Bernard Lane.**

MAY 5th : Local Surveys – Parish maps and Village Appraisals.

MAY 12th : Rural housing issues, CASE STUDY : GLOS RURAL HOUSING ASSOC with **Desmond Saunders.**

MAY 19th : Co-operatives and community enterprise – opportunities for local co-operative action, with **Dutch Holland.**

MAY 26th : The historical context – visual records : FILM – Twenty Four Square Miles and Urchfont archive – Vic Dridgell's video of Blakeney

JUN 2nd : Conclusion of course, summary of content and issues emerging. Plans for continuing activities including future field trip and follow-up meeting (Wed 8th July at 7.30pm)

SPEAKERS AND CONTACTS RELATING TO THE COURSE

Catherine Burnett, R.D.A. Fieldworker, 15 Carpenters Cottages, Clearwell, Coleford, Gloucs TEL: 0594 36329

Dutch Holland, Gloucestershire Co-operative Development Agency, 20 Berkeley St, Gloucester GL1 2TG TEL: 0452 425093

Bernard Lane, Dept of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Bristol, Wills Memorial Building, Queens Rd, Bristol TEL: 0272 303620

Desmond Saunders, 12 Knights Way, Newent, Gloucs TEL: Newent 871 672

Jim Stewart, Forest of Dean District Council, Cinderford, Gloucs TEL: Dean 22291

Stephen Wright, Gloucs Rural Community Council, 15 College Green, Gloucester TEL: 0452 28491

Course Tutor

Ian Scott, 2 Knapps Hill Cottages, Buckland Newton, Dorset DT2 7DB TEL: 03005 455

APPENDIX B

STANTON 2000
YOUR VILLAGE AND ITS FUTURE

Tutor: Graham Howes, Staff Tutor in Social Sciences
University of Cambridge Board of Extra-mural Studies

1 October	**Images of Stanton** (video presentation)	
8 October	**The changing rural community**	
	Graham Howes	
	Anna Williams – Field worker, Community Council for Suffolk	
15 October	**Work and unemployment**	
	Mrs Betty Alban – Development Officer, St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)	
	Ben Linscott – Area Planning Officer, SEBC	
22 October	**Housing and health**	
	Stephen Cook – Chief Housing Officer, SEBC	
	Mrs Rachel Shadbolt – Community Health Council	
29 October*	**Youth and age**	*Venue to be arranged
	Peter Brazier – Community Education Officer	
	Graham Howes	

Mid-term break: Guy Fawkes Night

12 November	**Education and amenity**	
	Derek Babb – Area Community Education Officer	
	Tom Sherb – Area Education Officer, SEBC	
19 November	**Rural development – theory and practice**	
	Graham Howes	
	Anna Williams	
26 November	**Planning and participation**	
	Alan Johnson – Chief Planning Officer, SEBC	
3 December	**A strategy for Stanton**	
10 December	**Towards 2000** – concluding panel discussion	

Course details

WHERE? Stanton Middle School
WHEN? Thursday evenings from 1 October at 7.30 pm
HOW MUCH? £10 for the whole course with concessions for pensioners and students.
FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT Sara Willetts on Stanton 51474

ELLESMERE · SHROPSHIRE

Community Council of Shropshire/Workers' Educational Association

COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION

1 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Context and history of Rural Development in the UK. Characteristics of the Rural Development Area and Rural Development Programme (speaker from Rural Development Forum or Officers' Working Party, Development Commission's Slide Package?)

2 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES LOCALLY?

Unemployment, transport, lack of opportunities/facilities for young people, threats to secondary schools. Tourism development (double edged sword?), changing agricultural policies

3 VOLUNTARY ACTION AND SELF HELP

Motivation and effectiveness of voluntary effort, support networks and advice provision, the statutory framework, local government, including parish councils, etc

4 TRANSPORT SERVICES

Impact of the Transport Act 1985. What is the local picture? What are the opportunities for self help/new businesses?

5 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

How are decisions made? Is there conflict between conservation and development? Does development necessarily produce jobs (involvement by District/County Planning Officer, possibility of role play)?

6 SMALL BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS

Scope for community business/co-operatives (input from CoSIRA/Co-operative Development Agency)

7 LOCAL SERVICES, SHOPS, SCHOOLS, HEALTH CARE, ETC

Background of decline, what are the factors that affect provision, what are the alternatives?

8 RECORDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A springboard to motivate wider action in the community

9 COPING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

A community as well as personal matter. What are the needs and opportunities for work, training, meaningful activity?

10 REVIEW OF THE COURSE

Development of practical project proposals

The Future of the Colne Valley

A day school to be held on
SATURDAY 14TH FEBRUARY
AT THE SLAITHWAITE COMMUNITY CENTRE
SLAITHWAITE

This day school has been jointly organised by the University of Leeds and the Yorkshire Rural Community Council to examine the present position and the future prospects of the Colne Valley. It is aimed at anyone who is interested in the area and is intended not only to provide information, but also a forum where the audience can express their own views on the subject. The day school is free of charge.

PROGRAMME

9.30.a.m.	Introduction
10.00.a.m.	The Colne Valley – J. Wrathall (Huddersfield Polytechnic)
10.45.a.m.	Future Economic Development – A.Goodram (Kirklees Economic Development Unit)
11.20.a.m.	Coffee
11.35.a.m.	Small Business Development – B.Lister (COSIRA)
12.15.a.m.	Tourism – D.Wyler (Tourism Officer, Kirklees)
12.50.a.m.	Lunch (a buffet lunch will be provided)
2.00.p.m.	Three prospective parliamentary candidates for the Colne Valley constituency – J.Harman (Labour), N.Priestley (Liberal/Alliance) and G.Riddick (Conservative) will outline their thoughts on the area and its future development, to be followed by an Open Forum.

If you would like to attend this event, please fill in the form below and return to the University of Leeds Adult Education Centre, 10 Mornington Villas, Bradford BD8 7HB. You can just turn up on the day but it would be useful if we could have an estimate of the numbers likely to attend for catering purposes.

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

I would like to attend a day school THE FUTURE OF THE COLNE VALLEY on Saturday, 14th February, 1987.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

TEL.NO .....

PARISH COUNCILS BRIEFING

This extract from the *Rural Resettlement Handbook* (Prism Alpha 1984) provides an introduction to parish councils. Note, however, that parish council finance has been affected by the 1988 Local Government (Finance) Act – details from the National Association of Local Councils.

PARISH POLITICS

There are two sorts of parish whose boundaries do not always coincide:-

Ecclesiastical Parishes – each centred on a church, with a Parochial Church Council under chairmanship of the vicar or rector, and *Civil Parishes* with which we are concerned. A broadly similar system operates in Wales where 'parishes' are called 'communities' and thus 'parish councils' are called 'community councils'.

Parish Meetings – every one of the English civil parishes must have a parish meeting open to all of its electors. This should occur annually between the 1st March and 1st June and may also be convened as often as required. One of the ways of doing this is for any six electors of a parish to request a meeting.

Notice specifying the time, place and business of an intended meeting must be clearly posted publicly at least seven days in advance. Decisions are finally determined by a majority of those present with the chairman, usually the parish council chairman if there is one, having a casting vote; very often a decision taken more informally with the chairman assessing the feeling of the meeting. A parish meeting is entitled to discuss any public matter of a parochial nature and may pass resolutions on such issues. However, it should be noted that such resolutions are only binding upon the parish council in a few instances (for example over the provision of allotments – see below). In other cases, parishioners will need, where necessary, to put pressure on parish councils (and other authorities) to respond to the resolutions of parish meetings.

Rural Parish Councils

There are about 7,800 parish councils in England. Several civil parishes may be grouped or amalgamated into a single parish council. A parish council is a small local authority, the corporation of the village(s) if you like. Many country towns have councils which are also of parish status with the same powers. Since the Local Government Act of 1972 came into effect in April 1974 the scope and powers of parish councils have been considerably extended. They may precept (raise a rent) each year for funds towards projects which they are specifically authorised to undertake. This precept is added onto the District and County rates but payment of it is of course limited to the parish concerned. Most of the financial limits on expenditure were abolished and providing that there is statutory authority (see below) the parish council may spend an unlimited amount towards the provision of a variety of services. The following areas of activity (amongst others) are authorised in this way:

A parish council may:

(1) Acquire land in or outside its area for the benefit of the local community. It may request through the District Council for a compulsory purchase order if no suitable land is available on the market. (For details see Local Government Act 1972).

(2) Provide car parks, public lighting, burial grounds, seats, shelters, a guarantee for post and telephone services, public conveniences, sports facilities of all kinds, open spaces and greens, public clocks, maintain footpaths.

(3) Provide equipment and manage premises

such as a hall or help a voluntary non-profit-making organisation (such as a village hall committee charitably constituted).

(4) Provide entertainments of any kind and facilities for dancing, maintain bands and support and encourage local arts and crafts. In connection with all these activities it can provide the necessary buildings and premises and do anything incidental to them such as providing refreshments and programmes and advertising. It may encourage visitors by providing or subsidising facilities for recreation, conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions, etc. All these and a number of other powers are held by parish councils and as has been said there is no limit on the sums of money they may spend on carrying them out (although, of course, parish councillors would have to persuade the electorate at election time that past expenditure was wise). Some parish councils do not use their powers at all extensively and many do not see the potential they may have for regenerating their communities if these powers are used as part of a general plan of action.

Allotments

Where there is a demand for allotments the parish council is legally obliged to provide them (though limited by the Allotments Acts as to the amount of money they may spend on provision). The normal way to prove a need is to seek others interested in obtaining allotments and then to hold a parish meeting (or use the annual parish meeting) to show to the council the demand (usually gauged at at least 6 electors requiring allotments). Otherwise the parish council may say that the need is not proven. For further information on allotments contact the *National Association of Leisure Gardeners.*

The Free Twopence

In addition to the above powers, a parish council may spend annually the product of a 2p rate (usually several hundreds of pounds for even quite a small community) on:

(i) expenditure which in the council's opinion is in the interests of its area or any part of it, or all or some of the inhabitants – and not otherwise authorised, for example, improvements to a village surgery.

(ii) contributions to the funds of any charitable body in furtherance of that body's work in the U.K.

(iii) in various other minor ways.

Planning

Any parish council that has informed its District Council that it wishes to be notified of planning applications within its area (and most have) is entitled to receive such notice. Indeed in many cases a full set of plans is now sent. The parish council then has fourteen days in which to comment.

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Councils must meet at least four times a year. All meetings must be open to the public and the press (who may only be excluded by specific resolutions on individual issues where publicity could prejudice the public interest). There is no right for members of the public to speak at parish council meetings (except at the chairman's request) but many Councils are now introducing a 'democratic half hour' or 'public discussion period', usually held before the meetings, as an open session.

Elections

Generally speaking any person aged over 21 years who is an elector or a resident or a land-owner or has his principal work place in a parish may stand for election. Ordinary elections coincide with the

election year of the district councillor representing the parish.

Election day is the first Thursday in May. Nomination papers may be obtained from District Councils (the returning officer) and require signatures by a proposer and seconder who must be electors for the parish. Electors must be named in the appropriate local electoral register.

However, be warned before standing for election that each situation should be judged on its own merits, particularly as the intervention of newcomers in parish politics can in some circumstances be a very sensitive area. In general, a useful tactic before attempting to get elected onto a parish council might be to work through parish meetings and through attendance at council meetings.

N.B. The above notes due to brevity miss many points in this complicated field. For further reading contact the *National Association of Local Councils*, 108 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LD (Telephone: 01 637 1865)

● *I'd lived in my parish for three years when some councillors actually asked me to join them when a place became available because the vicar (an elected councillor) moved to another parish.*

I think it may be helpful to pinpoint the reasons why they (I guess two of the more responsibly-minded existing councillors) felt they needed an opinionated, pushy 'outsider' like me to help them out.

There is much more tugging of forelocks still going on in rural areas than anyone realises. It's not always obvious, of course, but it's there in the form of a sense of importance which people feel when faced with one of the 'old brigade'.

Our Chairman, the Colonel, for example, is a force to be reckoned with. He's well into his seventies, owns vast lands around the village, he used to be the director of the local industry which employed and still does, a high proportion of local wage-earners and he's a pillar of the church and conservative association and he's going deaf!

He was born and bred to order people about and with one wag of his finger and a few autocratic words can silence almost anybody. On top of all that, he can be quite charming.

The situation at present, which I shall describe, brings a gleam to the eyes of those two councillors I mentioned earlier and has even slightly woken up those four who previously had spent every meeting in silence except to say 'yes' or 'no' to the Colonel. One even said last meeting, "Excuse me Colonel, I haven't quite finished", and ploughed on with his point while the old gentleman muttered under his breath about the lateness of the hour. Bravo!

We now meet monthly from 7.30-9.30/10.00pm. We have a new highly efficient clerk whose salary has been doubled because of the extra work. We have a job creation scheme with three men doing all sorts of long-outstanding things like mending stiles, painting fences, etc.

We commissioned a local artist to paint a picture for a presentation, which previously would have been a dull, expensive brass plaque.

Machines for grass and hedge-cutting have been purchased. We are in the process of compiling a Village Guide for new residents. A tree planting scheme is on the table.

Innumerable letters have been written, opening up areas of interest and activity never before entertained.

I'm hoping to persuade my fellows to approach the farmer who owns a riverside field adjoining the middle of the village with a view to buying some land and landscaping it, as the village

has no beautiful, leafy place for people to sit as yet.

I'm not claiming credit for all this, I think I acted as a catalyst. Another new councillor joined us soon after me and he has been very effective as a 'new broom' and some of the existing councillors have responded well to the influx of energy. I'm also aware that we are only at the beginning and there are possibilities and far reaching benefits which could be won.

There's a negative side, inevitably. I recently was told of an overheard conversation, when one village lady said to another, "How did that woman get on to the council? She's only been here five minutes!"

To would-be councillors, I would say, be courageous, thick-skinned, do your homework and try to encourage and make friends with as many people as possible". ●

ANON
(for obvious reasons!)

APPENDIX

USING THE MEDIA

PRESS RELEASES

The key to the active use of the media is the press notice or release. Every day, news enters the media system by means of thousands of press releases. Many press releases fail to receive any attention. But many others provide the bread and butter of the journalists' diet.

The adult educator should issue a press release announcing the start of each local community development course. Its successful first session should be similarly notified. Each important practical activity or project of the group should be the subject of a new press notice. Some examples are given at the end of this section. The basic rules for a press release are:

- You should establish who you are, and who you represent at the outset if possible by means of headed notepaper.
- You should type your release, double spacing your work, writing on only one side of A4 paper. Do not split sentences over two pages, number your pages and staple – not paper clip – your finished work. At the end, write ENDS.
- You must remember that the media is interested in *news*. This means events that are important, novel, different, featuring interesting personalities.
- Write clearly and simply but **not** in "journalese" – the journalist will do that for you, far better than you ever can.
- Put your best and most important news first. The first paragraph should convey the gist in just two sentences. Use the 5 "W" check list to cover your story in these two sentences: Who, What, When, Where, Why.
  Then go on to explain your story more fully.
- Quote known local people if you can, to add colour and interest as follows:
  District Councillor Arthur Dingbat said "I am delighted to hear of the bus survey proposal: we have needed this development for years".
- Use short paragraphs each conveying a separate part of the story. This helps editors to cut your story to fit the space available. Total length will normally be only 1 or 2 sides, rarely more than 3-4 sides.
- You should give at the end your name, contact telephone number, date the release and say whether it is for immediate release or not for use until a later date.
- You must **never, ever lie** or be tempted to distort the truth in any way. If you do you will be found out and lose all future credibility – or worse. Equally, do not say anything which you cannot prove.
- You must not be disappointed or angry if the editors ignore your efforts or do not use your work in quite the way you would have liked. Gaining access to the media is always a little like the work of a lion tamer: usually the lion acts in a predictable way, but occasionally the tamer receives a bite!

These ten basic rules should be read in conjunction with the examples of releases given below. Having produced your own work, make plenty of copies and send them off to the News Editors of all the relevant papers, local radio and television stations, remembering to keep a couple of copies for your own files. Don't let these go, you may need them many months later. A little local knowledge is useful: it helps to have your release arrive in good time for a weekend publication – at least three days before the press date for papers, and even longer for radio and television if they might cover your activities with a reporter or film crew. If you know a reporter, send him or her a

copy of your notice, but send a copy to the Editor too. Your friend may be on holiday, have the 'flu or be just too busy.

Sometimes you will be telephoned by reporters seeking clarification of what you have said, or further information. Be on your guard here. It is very easy to exaggerate or make an unfortunate reference on the telephone. Your off-the-cuff remarks about the inadequacy of the local council may well be reported to add spice to an otherwise dull story, with disastrous results! If necessary, ask the reporter what is required and telephone back with a carefully prepared statement.

Real examples of press releases which have been issued successfully are given below. First, however, two 'imaginary' examples illustrating the right and wrong ways to start.

PRESS RELEASE

The University of Grimesville is putting on a 12 meeting course in Little Twittering next Autumn on community development. Discussions have been held for months now with the Community Council, the District Council and the Parish Council about this course. It is hoped the course will solve many of Little Twittering's problems. The course is one of 400 offered by the University over a wide area of topics including art history; computing and basic biology.....

PRESS RELEASE
A FIRST FOR LITTLE TWITTERING

A pioneering new University Course will be launched in Little Twittering next month. Designed especially for local residents, it will address key issues such as the shortage of affordable housing, bus service failures and the chance of obtaining money to restore the historic duck pond. Local Councillor Fred Snoodlewhistle said at the County Education Committee on Wednesday 9th May "I hope as many people as possible will join this exciting new venture in the community development of Little Twittering".

Press Release number one would probably make little headway. It has no title. The media rarely uses a title directly from a press release but a snappy title is vital to attract attention, and to give the piece a recognisable 'handle'. The text itself fails on a number of counts. It is vague, it does not quote concrete local issues, it does not focus on the news for Little Twittering. It is a narrative beginning with the discussions which precede all courses - rather boring for most readers. And, it has no human context.

Press release number two is better. It has a title. It concentrates on tangible local issues. It quotes a known person. It uses words like first, pioneering, new, especially, key issues, venture - all of which suggest newsworthy, action-related activities. This release shows that its author has realised that journalists need to arouse the interests of their readers if they are to sell

newspapers or get people to tune into Radio Grimesville. Worthiness alone does not make good news.

PRESS RELEASE

3rd November, 1986

COMMUNITY COURSE MEMBERS MISSING!

Bristol University's new course on Rural Community Development got off to a good start in Dulverton last Saturday – but only attracted six participants. The course, which was specially requested by Dulverton Town Council, is a joint venture between the University and the West Somerset Rural Development Programme. University Lecturer Bernard Lane said that the second session of the course would still go ahead as planned on Saturday, November 15th at 2 pm. It is known that a number of people who had intended to be at the first session, will be joining the course then. Other new members will be most welcome.

Dulverton Town Council member, Mr Keith Ross, said that despite the low attendance, last Saturday's session had been very valuable. His words were echoed by Brushford Parish Council Secretary, Mrs Rosemary Hart.

Similar courses have been held in other parts of the West Country with great success leading to a series of real benefits ranging from extra bus services to community halls and housing schemes.

Topics for the 15th November will be: Local Tourism Development Schemes and Community Initiative Ideas from Europe. In addition to providing speakers for the course the organisers have also arranged for a small seed fund to be available to help practical projects in the area. Anyone wanting further information should contact Jan Ross on Dulverton 23223 or Janet Johnson of the West Somerset Rural Development Area office on Minehead 2786.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two press releases which successfully generated press coverage.

APPENDIX D

PRESS RELEASE

10 July, 1987

GERMAN PLANNERS TO VISIT DULVERTON

A delegation of three rural planners from West Germany will visit Dulverton on Saturday 18th July. The group are coming to hear at first hand about Bristol University's recent "Developing Your Community" course, and the work of the associated Dulverton Think Tank. They hope to pick up new ideas to use in their own village and small town improvement schemes.

FRAU GUDRUN MULLER-MOLLENHAUER and FRAU ROSWITHA RUSCHENDORF will be representing planning offices in Heuchelheim and Marburg. DR. KONRAD MOLLENHAUER works in the Cultural Institute of the Province of Hesse. They will be accompanied by BERNARD LANE of Bristol University's Department of Extra-Mural Studies.

The German party are keen to hear about Dulverton's self-help efforts because of the serious effect Common Market agricultural quotas are having on rural communities in Germany. They have been particularly impressed by Dulverton's tourism promotion, with its new brochure available in German, French, Spanish and English.

The group plans to meet Dulverton's Town Clerk, TOM TROAKE, The Middle School's Community Tutor, JAN ROSS and other members of last Winter's University class. They will also meet MIKE GAMMON Chairman of the Dulverton Town Council; Mr Gammon speaks German as a result of his Army service in Germany. The role of the West Somerset Rural Development Programme will be explained by JANET JOHNSON, the Field Officer for the area.

In the autumn, the Dulverton course will resume its studies on Saturday afternoon, October 24th at the Middle School: new course members will be most welcome. Items on the syllabus will include setting up Community Trusts and further ideas for developing local tourism.

PRESS CONFERENCES

The press conference is an event most people are used to seeing on television, when the Prime Minister or the Chairman of a large company announces news of national importance. But, on a smaller scale, the press conference can be an equally valuable vehicle for the local group. Typically it will be called to give news of an important new venture, or to celebrate the completion of an ambitious project. The project could be the launching of a local tourist brochure, the first run of a community bus, or the opening of a new or extended village hall. There are a number of advantages over a simple press release. If you can attract reporters you will get wider coverage in several papers and/or other media. You can make the conference the reason for inviting influential outside people to speak on your behalf, thus helping your community's future case for obtaining help. A successful press conference can boost group confidence, impress your friends, and quieten down the jeremiahs who tend to be scornful of the aspirations of people who try to help improve the lot of their locality.

Seven basic rules should be followed for a successful conference.

1. You need to issue a Press Notice giving warning of the conference about 2 to 3 weeks in advance of the event if you can. The notice will be similar to a press release, but will begin by inviting those who receive the notice to the conference. It will go on to say why the conference has been called, who will be speaking about what and then the story behind the conference. Finally there will be a list of who – apart from the press – has been invited to the conference, and who will be available for interview. If you think television might be interested, you should add a final section about the possibilities available for photography/filming etc at the venue.

2. Who should be invited to the conference apart from the press and special guest speakers? Clearly, all the members of the Community Development class should be included, along with the parish council, the District and County Councillors for the area and, if relevant, your Member of Parliament. The Community Council, representatives of local business/schools, and representatives of national organisations and quangos should also be on the list. (They will not all attend but the invitation alone will be a diplomatic plus). Remember, this is the chance for the group to celebrate its success, and by doing this publicly, it can impress people who may hold the key to future possibilities.

3. The special guest speaker or speakers should be chosen with two ideas in mind. They should be of importance in the area, and potentially helpful to the cause of the community in the future. At the same time, they should have something to say of value and of interest to the press. Possible guests (no more than one or two are needed) could be the Member of Parliament, the Chairman of the Regional Tourist Board, the Leader of the District or County Council, an important person in a government agency, a major landowner, a bishop etc. Your guest speakers must be given 6-8 weeks notice of the event and you will need to explain very clearly to them what the conference is about. On the day, someone from the course should introduce them, thank them, and explain at the conference the story of the group and its work.

4. Refreshments should be provided. This would

normally be a glass of wine or similar, with perhaps a few 'nibbles'. Much depends on your circumstances. Irish rural press conferences often serve whisky and hard boiled eggs; the English are usually more restrained. If at all possible, a local flavour to the refreshments should be given. The offering of refreshments means that the timing of the event becomes almost automatically shortly before lunch (11/11.30am) or late afternoon (4/4.30pm). The late afternoon sessions tend to be unpopular with TV crews.

5. If possible a small exhibition, perhaps stalls showing local products, should be arranged. Literature on the work of the group, the Rural Community Council or the Rural Development Area etc should be made available.

6. Key people in the group should be both acknowledged and named in the press notice; on the day, they should be available for interview by the press, and be ready to be photographed.

7. The conference should be timed to give the weekly press plenty of time to write up their story and to process their photographs. Monday or Tuesday are often quiet days, with sufficient time before a Thursday print deadline. Weekend sessions, incidentally, are definitely out – even the press like a rest.

APPENDIX 3

COURSE EVALUATION – QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out what you really thought about the course so that improvements and changes can be made in future years. You should not put your name on the form. Thank you very much for your help.

1. Where was your course held?

2. How did you hear about the course?

3. What particularly attracted you to the course?

4. What did you expect of the course when you joined?

5. Which subjects particularly interested you?

6. What did you enjoy most about the course?

7. What subjects did you feel were not so relevant

8. Would you have preferred the course at a different time of day – if so, which?

9. Would you have preferred the course to be longer or shorter – if so, how many weeks?

10. Would you have preferred each meeting to be longer or shorter – if so, how long?

11. Would it have been an advantage to: hold the course
    - (a) fortnightly Yes/No
    - (b) monthly Yes/No
    - (c) On a Saturday Afternoon Yes/No

12. Was the cost of the course:
    - (a) Just right? Yes/No
    - (b) Too much? Yes/No
    - (c) Would you have paid more? Yes/No

13. Was the Field Trip useful? If yes, why? If no, why not?

14. Have you spoken to other people in your community about the course? If so, what was their reaction?

15. Do you feel the course was useful to your area?

16. Have you attended any other courses in the last three years?
    - University Yes/No
    - WEA Yes/No
    - Local Authority Yes/No
    - Other Yes/No

17. If you were to attend a future course, would you prefer it to start:
    - (a) In early October Yes/No
    - (b) In January Yes/No
    - (c) After Easter Yes/No
    - (d) No preference Yes/No

18. Any other comments.

Can rural communities take the initiative in the complex, fast moving world around them today?

ACRE's five year Rural Adult Education Project has developed an approach using village-based courses as a catalyst to rural community action. During that time, courses have been set up throughout rural England where local people learn about rural issues and decide upon positive action to take within their own communities.

DOING BY LEARNING is the project's Handbook and is the definitive guide to creating and using community development courses to counter contemporary rural challenges. Step by step, it takes the reader through the stages of arranging a course and points to a wealth of resource material for planning each session. Detailed guidance is included on:

- *Planning and publicising the course* ● *Finding a tutor*
- *Managing the budget* ● *Developing a curriculum*
- *Using guest speakers* ● *Outcomes and achievements*

DOING BY LEARNING is also a philosophy for community development. It is therefore essential reading, not only for prospective course organisers and tutors, but also for members of rural communities and all those interested in the application of educational practice to their needs.

Authors Ian Scott, Jackie Denman and Bernard Lane are well placed to put across this new approach to rural community development. Bringing extensive related educational and community work experience to bear upon their subject, they show the critical part members of rural communities can themselves play in securing their community's future.

We gratefully acknowledge sponsorship of this book by:

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ISBN 1 871157 35 8